THE THEME OF DEATH IN THE WORKS OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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Maxine Cooper McCall

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APPROVAL SHEET

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by

Maxine Cooper McCall

Approved by:

Curtis Williams
Chairman of Thesis Committee

W. S. Kinchelow
Major Professor

G. P. Eggenschwiler
Chairman of the English Department

Curtis Williams
Director of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

As Philip Young pointed out in a brief critical study of Hemingway (1959), ". . . death is a subject which by his own admission has obsessed Hemingway for a long time." Ernest Hemingway, indeed, courted death throughout his lifetime; and it is a prevalent, recurring theme in most of his works. As indicated by the Russian critic J. Kashkeen in a 1935 article, ". . . the theme of death is to be found in nearly every Hemingway story." Ever present, death is an important force motivating his characters as well as having been a motivating force in his own life.

The purpose of this study was to trace the theme of death as it recurs in Hemingway's life and works in an effort to determine his attitude toward death, how this attitude was formulated, how it influenced his novels and short stories, and what bearing this attitude may have had on the nature of his own sudden death, so like the violent deaths he repeatedly described in his stories. Some use was made of ideas on the theme formulated by Hemingway's contemporaries in their comments on his life and works; however, the study has confined itself for the most part to biographical evidence and to the works themselves.

Conclusions drawn from the study were that death is, indeed, a major--if not the major--theme in the works of Ernest Hemingway;

that Hemingway's obsession with death was not inspired by a self-destructive urge, but was an essential part of his search for meaning in life; that Hemingway's attitude toward death did not remain constant, but progressed from fatalism (as expressed, for example, in A Farewell to Arms) to spiritual optimism (in The Old Man and the Sea) and was closely allied with his changing feelings toward humanity (from social withdrawal in The Sun Also Rises to a return to humanity and patriotic ideals in For Whom the Bell Tolls); that his philosophy of death was in reality a philosophy of life, for his real obsession was with living, not dying; and that the manner of his dying, whether accidental or suicide, was climactic to and consistent with his philosophy of death.

APPRECIATION

There were many people whose assistance was invaluable in the completion of this study. These merit special thanks:

Dr. Cratis Williams, my adviser, for his willingness to take on this task in addition to his already heavy load of duties as Director of Graduate Studies, for his encouragement, his suggestions, and for many hours of his valuable time.

Mrs. Lloyd Cooper, my mother, and Mrs. Tom McCall, my mother-in-law, for their kind assistance in proof-reading.

My husband, Don, without whose patience, cooperation, assistance, and moral support, this project would never have been completed.

THOUGHTS ABOUT ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Ernest lived the life he believed in--he lived up to the code he preached. . . . he proved himself in action. He was not just a voice in the air.

I think sometimes in reading him of Walt Whitman's great lines: "This is no book--who touches this touches a man." I think also of those wonderful lines written by Chapman, the translator of Homer:

> Give me a spirit that on life's
> rough sea
> Loves to have his sails filled with
> a lusty wind
> Even till his sailyard tremble, his
> masts crack,
> And his rapt ship run on her side
> so low
> That she drinks water and her
> keel ploughs air.
> There is no danger to a man that
> knows
> What life and death is--there's not
> any law
> Exceeds his knowledge.

That is the kind of man Hemingway tried to be, and he superbly succeeded.

--Comments by Max Eastman
in Saturday Review, March 24, 1962.

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CHAPTER I

DEATH STRIKES THE THEME

GUN BLAST KILLS ERNEST HEMINGWAY

AUTHOR ERNEST HEMINGWAY IS KILLED BY SHOTGUN BLAST

Those were typical headlines that stunned the world with shock and disbelief July 2, 1961, when America's most legendary author took his own life in the foyer of his Ketchum, Idaho, home. For nearly half a century Ernest Hemingway had set a pattern of living that seemed constantly to defy death. He had seemed indestructible. "Always before he had managed to survive. Now, unbelievably, the embattled old lion was dead."[1] He had been a virile man and writer who in his time had made of himself a legend--a legend which seemed indestructible. He seemed to take particular pleasure in looking death squarely in the eye and emerging the victor. He lived life to the full and seemed to enjoy living to the extent that the world, along with his wife, at first found it incredible that he had taken his own life. Was his death a suicide or was Miss Mary right in insisting "that this in some incredible way was an accident"?[2]

Here are the facts of the shooting as reported in part by

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[1]Carlos Baker, "Hemingway," Saturday Review (July 29, 1961), p. 11.

[2]"Hemingway," Life (July 14, 1961), p. 67.

United Press International:

> Ketchum, Idaho--Ernest Hemingway, 62, the bearded American novelist who gained fame writing of death and violence, died Sunday of a shotgun blast at his home here.
>
> The shooting could have been accidental or a suicide. . . . Hemingway's wife, Mary, said he "accidentally killed himself while cleaning a gun." There were no witnesses.
>
> But local authorities indicated they felt this theory was unlikely for a man who had been an expert with firearms for decades.
>
> Blaine County Sheriff Frank L. Hewitt said that when he arrived at the two-story concrete home near Ketchum he saw Hemingway lying in the foyer near a gun rack. The dead author was wearing pajamas and a robe.
>
> A double-barreled .12 gauge shotgun with one barrel fired was lying beside the body.[3]

In a later press release Coroner Ray McGoldrick stated that Blaine County authorities had decided not to hold an inquest in the shotgun death of the Nobel Prize-winning novelist and that "people can make up their own minds" whether famed author Ernest Hemingway killed himself accidentally or committed suicide. Asked if he thought Hemingway killed himself or died accidentally, McGoldrick responded:

> I wasn't there so I don't know. Maybe the truth will never be known. No one saw it.
>
> The family is willing to let it go that way and that's all right with me. The wife thinks it was an accident.[4]

Adding that he did not wish to imply a leaning on his part either toward the suicide or the accident theory, the coroner concluded

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[3]News item in the Charlotte Observer, July 3, 1961.

[4]Ibid., July 4, 1961.

with the statement that people could judge for themselves.

It is not, of course, the primary purpose of this study to attempt to prove either the suicide or the accident theory about Hemingway's death; nonetheless, it is hoped that from the material gathered here concerning Hemingway's attitude toward death as revealed in his life and in his works people might be better able to "judge for themselves" the nature of his death if they so desire.

It might be noted here that the "cleaning a gun" theory seems unlikely since there were no gun-cleaning implements near the body. And Miss Mary later gave this statement to reporters at a press conference:

> The gun was one of the favorite things he owned. He wasn't cleaning it, but he was certainly looking at it. I sometimes take out my camera and look at it although I don't plan to take a picture. . . . I feel certain that this, in some incredible way, was an accident.[5]

And, of course, there is always that possibility.

On the other hand, the papers were full of the irony of Hemingway's "suicide" and that of his father thirty-three years before. Professor Carlos Baker, noted Hemingway expert, was apparently one of the first to recall that Dr. Clarence Hemingway also died of a self-inflicted gun-shot wound. He also pointed out to reporters that both Hemingway and his father had become

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[5]Alfred G. Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man (New York: Lancer Books, Inc., 1961), p. 221.

depressed because of failing health and that their illnesses were ironically the same--hypertension and incipient diabetes.[6]

It is true that, like his father, Hemingway had been suffering from declining health for a number of years and that he had not been for some time the virile man the world remembered. Two professors, Seymore Betsky and Leslie Fiedler, from Montana State University visited Hemingway just after his return to Idaho from a trip to Spain as a journalist for Life magazine. Expecting to see the "barrel-chested robust giant" they had heard of all their lives, they were shocked by Hemingway's appearance. He was tall and thin, only resembling in fullness of face the man they had imagined. "And even the face was pale and red-veined, not ruddy or weather-beaten. . . . The dominant sense we had was of fragility." He spoke in "spurts of a few words, hardly ever in sentences."[7]

A few weeks later, November 30, 1960, Hemingway entered Mayo Clinic as George Xavier to undergo treatment for hypertension and a mild form of diabetes. His condition improved, he returned to Idaho on January 23. However, "tests at the Clinic had uncovered the possibility that Ernest might have hemochromatosis, a very rare disease that could bring an end to the functioning of various organs."[8] By March he was again depressed, and he returned

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[6]United Press International dispatch, the Charlotte Observer, July 4, 1961.

[7]Seymore Betsky, "A Last Visit," Saturday Review (July 29, 1961), p. 22.

to the Clinic in April (this time under his own name) for electro-shock treatments. His condition again improved, and in the last week of June he was released. His weight over the months of illness had gone from 220 to 155 pounds.

Back home on July 1 he acted by turns depressed and cheerful. Events of the day seemed normal: that afternoon Hemingway spoke with neighbor Chuck Atkinson; that evening in Sun Valley he and Mary enjoyed a "calm, good-natured dinner" with friend George Brown at a favorite restaurant;[9] that night after brushing his teeth, he joined Mary in the last lines of an old favorite song.[10] There was no apparent warning for the event of the morning of July 2, when author Ernest Hemingway took the final action of his life.

Many who knew Hemingway intimately support the suicide theory, giving "failing health" as the motive. Kurt Singer, recalling an interview with Hemingway in 1959, feels that the author no doubt had forebodings of his illness and was, perhaps even then, plotting his solution. In that interview Hemingway had sounded dubious about facing the future:

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[8]Leicester Hemingway, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1962), p. 255.

[9]Milt Machlin, The Private Hell of Hemingway (New York: Paperback Library, Inc., 1962), p. 220.

[10]Aronowitz, op. cit., p. 220.

> As you get older, many things change. You do not have the strength any more. . . . This is the tragedy. It takes you a lifetime to train your brain and when you have it in full control, you are too old. . . . Today I am a strange old man.
>
> At fifty it was still fun, you feel you are going to defend the title again. I won it in the twenties and defended it in the thirties and the forties and I didn't mind at all defending it in the fifties . . . but in the sixties . . .?[11]

Summarizing his own observations about the author's ill health and death, Singer comments on Hemingway's "gargantuan" will power and "unlimited energies":

> Until his last days when he swayed on his feet with a variety of illnesses, skin cancer, diabetes, nervous tensions, old wounds and premature old age, he was certain he could still win his battle for life. When the truth was told at the Mayo Clinic, he was still his own master by putting the silver-plated gun in his mouth.[12]

Hemingway's brother, Leicester, also gives evidence that Hemingway felt that his body, like the wonderful one-horse shay, was giving way all at once. The deaths of his good friends Gary Cooper and George Vanderbilt had deeply distressed the author, and Leicester Hemingway feels that at the time his brother possibly recalled a letter he had written to their parents more than forty years earlier:

> Ernest had written the family in 1918, after being wounded, that dying was a very simple thing, for he had looked at death and he knew. He said it was undoubtedly better to die in the happy period of youth, going out in a blaze of light, rather than having one's body worn out and old, and illusions shattered.

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[11] Kurt Singer, Hemingway: Life and Death of a Giant (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1961), pp. 24-25.

[12] Ibid., p. 105.

> And then, what has been called "the incredible accident" took place, the explosive period ending the career of this century's greatest American writer.
>
> . . . Like a samurai who felt dishonored by the word or deed of another, Ernest felt his own body had betrayed him. Rather than allow it to betray him further, he, who had given what he once described as the gift of death to so many living creatures in his lifetime, loaded the weapon he held and then leaned forward as he placed the stock of his favorite shotgun on the floor of the foyer, and found a way to trip the cocked hammers of the gun.[13]
>
> Ernest lived as he died--violently. He had tremendous respect for courage. During his own lifetime he traded in it, developed it, and taught other people a great deal about it. And his own courage never deserted him. What finally failed him was his body. This can happen to anyone.[14]

But perhaps the most valid support for the "failing health" motive comes from Hemingway himself. "Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you."[15] Ernest Hemingway (alias Robert Jordan) is the authority speaking in For Whom the Bell Tolls. He should know. For he, more than any other person in the Twentieth Century, had looked on the face of death, and he knew. He had become the living expert on a subject that most men fear to approach, yet one about which all men are innately curious. He devoted his life to research on the subject of death; in fact, his career as an author would almost seem to have been secondary to this his primary goal--to explain the enigma of life by studying its opposite. Or is death in

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[13] Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 256.

[14] Ibid., p. 12.

[15] Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 468.

reality the "opposite of life"? In truth, they may be one and the same, for without one there is not the other--like the two sides of a coin or an object with its shadow. A lifetime of research should have produced some startling answers. Actually Hemingway was more than "a man, a writer, and a legend" (as the oft-quoted phrase goes)--he was a seeker of truth, a seeker of knowledge about life and death. He emerges in life and in his works as a Captain Ahab--a Twentieth Century Melville--relentlessly pursuing the "great white Moby Dick" that first gives life its meaning, then takes it away.

How did Hemingway become obsessed with his macabre quest? What did he learn about death (and life)? How were his attitudes formulated and then modified at various periods of his life? What conclusions had he reached at the time of "the accident"? Clues are present in his life, in his works, and even perhaps in the manner of his death; and therein lies the real purpose of this study: to re-examine the life and works of Ernest Hemingway from the standpoint of his attitudes about death (and consequently life) as they are recorded there, hoping thereby to give new interpretation to one of America's literary giants.

CHAPTER II

A CRITIQUE OF DEATH

> He is above all a tragic writer, haunted, repelled, and attracted by the everlasting fear of mortality.
> . . . His stories appear to deal with a variety of themes: boxing, bullfighting, illegal operations, game-hunting, war, fishing; all of them physical subjects. But in reality Hemingway has only one theme--death.[1]

Those are the words of one critic, H. E. Bates; but he is not alone in his opinion that death is the recurrent theme which dominates Hemingway's work, motivating both the characters and their author.

There is, as Robert P. Weeks has expressed it, "no shortage of Hemingway criticism: the writings which deal with his work already bulk larger than the work itself,"[2] not to mention the amount of biographical writing which purports to place the man himself under the microscope. Interest in this man who made himself a "living legend" in his time has always been keen, but since his death even more interest, especially of a biographical nature, has been shown. And, as Weeks has further pointed out, "Hemingway criticism is as notable for dissension as for quantity . . . ."[3]

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[1]H. E. Bates, "Hemingway's Short Stories," The Modern Short Story: A Critical Survey (London, 1943), reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 76.

[2]Robert P. Weeks, Introduction to Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 1.

[3]Ibid.

Hemingway, at some time or another, has been analyzed from almost every angle. Particularly have there been studies of his superb writing skill which revolutionized contemporary literary style. His abandonment of big words and flowery phrases in favor of concrete, one-syllable Anglo-Saxon diction; vividness derived from exactness in selection of verbs and nouns rather than from adjectives and descriptive verbosity; simple, straightforward, uncomplicated sentences, more typical of contemporary, natural speech--these are almost universally praised by his critics.

> What Hemingway went for was that direct pictorial contact between eye and object, between object and reader. To get it he cut out a whole forest of verbosity. . . . He trimmed off explanation, discussion, even comment; he hacked off all metaphorical floweriness; he pruned off the dead, sacred clichés; until finally, through the sparse trained words, there was a view.[4]

It was this inimitable style that won for him the literary world's most coveted honors: first the Pulitzer Prize and then the Nobel Prize for Literature. The latter citation read: "Ernest Hemingway for his powerful mastery, which has created a new style in modern literature, as recently demonstrated again in The Old Man and the Sea."[5]

Though much of the reviewing has centered largely on Hemingway's style, eventually almost every critic or biographer gets around to the mention of death as a predominant Hemingway

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[4]Bates, op. cit., p. 73.

[5]Alfred G. Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man (New York: Lancer Books, Inc., 1961), p. 207.

theme, acknowledging its presence in most--if not in all--of his works as a deep underlying force, an undercurrent, that motivates his characters. Carl Sandburg's comment at the time of Hemingway's death is typical of many: "I watched him through one book after another having a profound influence on a style of fiction writing. He wrote often about valor and the facing of death."[6] From French critic André Maurois, "Hemingway's favorite characters are men who deal in death and accept its risk."[7] Maxwell Geismar heralds Hemingway as "one of the writers of the depths--of the buried forces of guilt, destruction, and death . . .--to emerge from the American tradition"[8] and compares him to Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, O'Neill, and "perhaps Faulkner" in this respect. Malcolm Cowley has also suggested that Hemingway should be grouped "with Poe and Hawthorne and Melville: the haunted and nocturnal writers, the men who dealt in images that were symbols of an inner world."[9] Theodore Bardacke is typical of the many critics who have pointed out such recurring symbols as rain, snow, a wall (the "absolutely perfect obstacle") which obviously represent "death" in much of Hemingway's

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[6]The Charlotte Observer, July 3, 1961.

[7]André Maurois, "Ernest Hemingway," Revue de Paris, LXII (March, 1955), as reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, op. cit., p. 38.

[8]Maxwell Geismar, "No Man Alone Now," Virginia Quarterly Review, XVII (October, 1941), p. 531.

[9]Malcolm Cowley, Introduction to The Portable Hemingway (New York: Viking, 1944), p. vii.

work.[10] Frederick Hoffman has noted that in certain of Hemingway's works "we discover an almost obsessive preoccupation with wounds and death."[11] And from E. M. Halliday, ". . . he never lets us quite forget that death awaits every man at some turn perhaps not far along the way."[12] Russian critics particularly have been fascinated by Hemingway's treatment of death. Leo Gurko remarks that Hemingway was "attracted by the smell of death" and asserts that "death as a form of art has been his abiding theme . . . ."[13] "The theme of violence and death," says Ivan Kashkeen, "is seldom absent from Hemingway's work." He continues: "Hemingway seems to realize that 'in the midst of life we are in death.' He cannot but feel death . . . is one of the main themes of modern decadent art."[14] And from critic Deming Brown this comment:

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[10]Theodore Bardacke, "Hemingway's Women" (1950), reprinted in Ernest Hemingway the Man and His Work, ed. John K. M. McCaffery (New York: World Publishing Company, 1950), p. 308.

[11]Frederick J. Hoffman, "No Beginning and No End: Hemingway and Death" (1953), reprinted in Interpretations of American Literature, eds. Charles Feidelson, Jr. and Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 329.

[12]E. M. Halliday, "Hemingway's Ambiguity: Symbolism and Irony," American Literature, XXVIII (1956), reprinted in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Weeks, op. cit., p. 54.

[13]Leo Gurko, "Hemingway in Spain," from The Angry Decade (1947), reprinted in Ernest Hemingway the Man and His Works, ed. McCaffery, op. cit., pp. 232, 234.

[14]Ivan Kashkeen, "Alive in the Midst of Death: Ernest Hemingway," Soviet Literature, No. 7 (1956), reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Baker, op. cit., pp. 162-163.

> But the obsession with death was only part of a larger composite of desolation in Hemingway. Accompanying this morbid, vigorous probing at the ultimate terror was a feeling of futility, an all-embracing attitude of indifference and passivity.[15]

Some critics have used other terms in discussing Hemingway's major theme (fear, panic, existentialism, defeat), but underlying even these is the pulsation of death: fear of dying; panic caused by a personal encounter with death; the absurdity of life because of the ever-present threat of death; defeat--death once removed by symbolism.

Russian critic Miller-Budnitskaya has gone so far as to say that "fear of death is the key to Hemingway's entire personal and creative biography, to his whole system of images and style."[16] And there are others who share his view that an understanding of Hemingway's preoccupation with death is essential to an understanding not only of the works themselves but also of the man who created them. That is, in fact, the premise upon which this thesis is built: remove death as a character from the Hemingway story and there will be no story left. The heroes and heroines suffer their individual torments, but the real antagonist in every major short story and novel is death.

Furthermore, one does not search far into Hemingway's works before discovering for himself what most critics have found to be

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[15]Deming Brown, "Hemingway in Russia," American Quarterly, V (1953), reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ibid., p. 147.

[16]Ibid.

true: that although each Hemingway story is "a perfectly finished work of art" when taken separately, its full meaning and depth appear only when taken in connection with all the rest of his work and included "in the mainstream of his artistic evolution."[17]

It would be inappropriate to mention here all the critics and biographers who have made astute studies and interpretations of Hemingway's life and works. Here in brief are mentioned just a few of the major ones whose publications were particularly helpful in the consideration of death as a theme in Hemingway's works and whose findings are occasionally cited as evidence in various chapters which follow.

Carlos Baker and Philip Young appear to have done the most extensive research into Hemingway, both having published full-length studies of the man and his works. Young's interpretations were particularly helpful in the analysis of the death theme. He has been quite perceptive in relating Hemingway works to one another, to the man himself, and to the mainstream of American literary thought.

John Killinger's offering, Hemingway and the Dead Gods, advances the theory that Hemingway was much akin to the existentialists in his philosophy of life and death. Killinger concludes, however, that the kinship between the views of Sartre and Camus

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[17] J. Kashkeen, "Ernest Hemingway: A Tragedy of Craftsmanship," from International Literature, No. 5 (1934), reprinted in Ernest Hemingway the Man and His Works, ed. McCaffery, op. cit., p. 72.

and those of Hemingway is more a matter of coincidence than agreement in principle: the similarities have arisen "because Hemingway and the existentialists are products of the same milieu--the catastrophic, war-ridden world of the twentieth century."[18]

Critiques of Hemingway's style, characterizations, and themes appearing in periodical form are innumerable; a mountain of magazine and newspaper articles confronts the Hemingway scholar. In recent years such men as Carlos Baker, Robert P. Weeks, and John McCaffery have undertaken to collect, edit, and publish anthologies of various critical essays in inexpensive paperback form. This valuable service has given the public easy access to the "most fruitful" approaches to his work which have been published over the years and also gives "wider circulation to several first-rate studies not readily available."[19] Three of these volumes proved helpful in the preparation of this paper: Hemingway and His Critics, an international anthology edited by Carlos Baker; Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Robert Weeks; and Ernest Hemingway the Man and His Work, a portrait in depth by his critics and friends, edited by John McCaffery. These volumes contain articles by such notables as Philip Young, Gertrude Stein, Maxwell Geismar, J. Kashkeen, Lincoln Kirstein, John Peale Bishop,

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[18]Quoted from book jacket. John Killinger, Hemingway and the Dead Gods (University of Kentucky Press, 1960).

[19]Weeks, loc. cit.

Deming Brown, André Maurois, Lionel Trilling, Edmund Wilson, H. E. Bates--to name a few whose ideas have been used to substantiate the views about Hemingway advanced in this research.

In addition to critical studies, four biographies published since Hemingway's death were consulted frequently. Life and Death of a Giant (1961), by Kurt Singer (author, lecturer, world-traveler --himself a "Hemingway type" of man), presents a highly emotive portrait. Singer refers repeatedly to Hemingway's preoccupation with death and feels that it was not only a motivating force in the author's works, but also in his life. Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man (1961), by Alfred Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, is a particularly valuable presentation. Authenticated, thorough, and well-articulated--this biography is of reference book quality. The Private Hell of Hemingway (1962), by Milt Machlin (personal friend of Hemingway for eight or nine years before his death), gives particular insight into Hemingway's last years. Of Hemingway and his work this book says:

> Ernest Hemingway's writings mirrored a world of love and courage, of violence and chaos. . . . he wrote . . . of men under stress, jeering fate, seeking always the secrets of death.
>
> But behind the stories he wrote was the fantastic story he lived, the larger-than-life legend that enveloped this hard-drinking, lusty giant who always had to face the most savage lion, catch the fish other men dreamed of, walk among the shellbursts in the many valleys of death.
>
> This then, is Hemingway the man, the adventurer of his age, the wanderer whose compulsion to know, to feel, drove him time after time to the brink of self-destruction--and gave the world a unique, knife-edged look at life.[20]

Leicester Hemingway's contribution, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (1961), has its own special value. Whereas other biographers have had to base their books largely on secondary sources (books, periodicals, the research of others, secondhand interviews), Leicester Hemingway had the advantage of intimate, personal acquaintance with his subject. In addition, he had access to Hemingway's intimate circle of family and friends and to Hemingway himself--in person and through letters. His book is based totally on primary references; and because of this advantage, it includes many anecdotes and insights into Hemingway's attitudes about life and death which are not present in any other source. It is important to note that in spite of the proximity of this biographer to his subject, the book is not sentimental; neither is it the outgrowth of brother devotion, the "hero worship" of a younger brother. Leicester Hemingway asserts from the beginning that in writing the book he tried to be "mindful of the obligations of a brother, a friend, a biographer."[21]

Earlier biographies such as the controversial character sketch by Lillian Ross, Portrait of Hemingway, and Charles Fenton's The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway: The Early Years (1954) were

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[20]Quoted from back cover. Milt Machlin, The Private Hell of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Paperback Library, 1962).

[21]Leicester Hemingway, "A Note and Acknowledgments," My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1961).

also useful. Fenton's book is a depth study of Hemingway between the years 1916 and 1924, giving complete coverage of his early life and writings. The work provides interesting reading about the years when "Hemingway acquired not only his basic attitudes as a man and as an artist, but also the material for much of his early fiction . . . ."[22] Furthermore, the biography is fully documented with detailed notes and is valuable as a reference also because of its extensive index. Robert Weeks refers to Fenton's study as "an indispensable book for those with a serious interest in Hemingway," but goes on to point out a weakness which this biography shares with many others:

> . . . nowhere is Hemingway's presence vividly felt in the book. Mr. Fenton has collected a great many pertinent facts from Oak Park, Kansas City, Fossalta, Toronto, Paris--all key cities in the young Hemingway's itinerary--but he never catches up with the man himself, who always seems to have moved on before Mr. Fenton arrives.[23]

Critics and biographers alike have had to grapple with this immense task of "catching up with the man himself," for as has been suspected, there can be little understanding of Hemingway's works without an understanding of the man behind them.

> The debate of the critics . . . has been powerfully influenced by a force outside the fiction itself: Hemingway the man. Some literature can be satisfactorily read and discussed without taking the author into account. But other literature seems

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[22]Quoted from flyleaf. Charles A. Fenton, The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway: The Early Years (New York: New American Library, 1954).

[23]Weeks, op. cit., p. 9.

> inseparable from the person who created it. To an extraordinary degree Hemingway and what he has written exist in a synergetic relationship, re-enforcing and fulfilling each other; he has created a personal legend which serves as an ambiance in which to read his work . . . .
>
> But if his personal legend has seized our imaginations, it has also repelled or attracted us for reasons that are seldom clear and never simple. Hemingway criticism is full of attempts to neutralize, measure, analyze or somehow cope with the author's galvanic personality.[24]

This criticism is no exception. It, too, will begin with scrutiny of the man; for long before it became a theme in his novels, death was the powerful theme dominating his life.

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[24] Ibid., pp. 7, 8.

CHAPTER III

A BIOGRAPHY OF DEATH

> . . . his life, a saga of a proud, undefeated, uncompromising giant. As an author, he told the story as he saw it and lived it. . . . As a human being, he lived dangerously, but like the cat of nine lives, survived the hazards of a war-time foreign correspondent on the front lines, a bullfighter, boxer, gambler, soldier, big game hunter, sail-fisherman, and most treacherous of all, searcher for the truth. His battle scarred body was a monument to a life filled with action, violence, curiosity and virility.[1]

Hemingway's first recorded encounter with death occurred at Windemere, the family's summer cottage on Walloon Lake in Michigan, when Ernest was only four or five years old. Ernest, on an errand to bring the milk from a neighboring farm, was carrying a short stick in his hand. He stumbled and fell, instinctively bringing up the hand with the stick to protect his face. The fall drove the stick into the back of his throat, gouging out parts of both tonsils. He lost a great deal of blood before getting back to the cottage, and had his father not been there to stop the bleeding, the incident might have proved fatal. Besides having a close brush with death, Ernest also learned at this early age a lesson in stoicism. As his brother Leicester recalls,

> Ernest's throat was tender for some time after the accident. Our father told him to concentrate on whistling . . . as a way to take his mind off the pain. And whistling became Ernest's stoic reaction to pain from that time on. A picture of the

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[1]Kurt Singer, Hemingway: Life and Death of a Giant (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1961), p. 16.

wounded hero taken in an Italian hospital during World War I shows him whistling through clenched teeth.[2]

Leicester records another early experience with death--this one involving a sick crow which five-year-old Ernest had vainly tried to restore to health. He insisted on carrying it around with him even after it had died. On the morning of the family's departure from Windemere, Ernest was seen carrying the dead bird around amidst the frantic activity of packing for the trip to Oak Park and securing the cottage for the winter. Later at the dock, Dr. Hemingway casually asked his son what happened to his crow. Revealing complete innocence of the reality of death, the boy complacently replied, "It's all right, Papa. I put it in my dresser drawer with lots of clothes around it so it will keep warm all winter."[3]

Such innocence of the nature of death did not last long. Awareness of death's grim reality came soon, in other summers, as Ernest was exposed to the violence of the Michigan woods. Accompanying his father on rounds among the Indians, young Hemingway was exposed to death as well as life. In fact, after watching his father assist in many Indian births under the most primitive conditions, Ernest came to associate birth with death (an association which had not changed at the time of his writing A Farewell to Arms).

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[2]Leicester Hemingway, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1962), pp. 21-22.

[3]Ibid., p. 23.

A milestone in Ernest's life was getting his first gun, a .20-gauge, single-barrel shotgun given him on his tenth birthday by his Grandfather Hemingway.[4] This gun opened up a whole new world of experience for Hemingway. His father was an expert shot, and from him Ernest learned the skills of hunting and the rules that govern it. Having been nearly blinded when a rifle exploded in his face during a surveying trip in North Carolina, Dr. Hemingway regarded guns with trememdous respect and taught his son to do likewise. The two spent many companionable hours together in the Michigan wilds, Dr. Hemingway, the teacher, and young Ernest, the apprentice, eager to learn everything about the man's world of freedom and skill and courage in the great outdoors--a world as far removed as possible from the frills and cellos and niceties of his mother's straight-laced Victorian parlor. As Leicester recalls, "Father was Ernest's most serious backer all his life. Ernest learned everything he could from him in the early years and loved him deeply."[5]

Yes, from his father and the Michigan experiences of his youth, Hemingway gained a love of the outdoors and the skills of hunting and fishing which he delighted in all his life. The simple, uncomplicated life of the Indians in the Michigan woods appealed to Ernest. Throughout his life and in his works he seemed to want

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[4] Ibid., p. 23.

[5] Ibid., p. 32.

to avoid entangling complications of living.[6] Hemingway's motto remained--keep life simple, without entangling alliances in love or in war.[7] Perhaps as a boy he noted his father's joy over a few precious hours of freedom away from the complications of home life and a nagging wife. Certainly Dr. and Mrs. Hemingway were unlike in attitude and approaches to living, and their bickering and their conflicting ideas about what was best for Ernest probably caused him to view marriage with aversion. Apparently Dr. Hemingway was too much of a gentleman to stand up to his wife and tell her off, and seeing his father so passively yield to the wife's dominant will made Hemingway sick. (He gives vent to his feelings in an early story, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife," which clearly--even in the title--shows Hemingway's preference for his father.)

Hemingway was never a mama's boy; in fact, he resisted

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[6]Notable examples are these: (1) soldier Krebs home from the war ("Soldier's Home"), wishing that he were anywhere else and that his mother would not nag about future plans or bring up the dreaded subject of marriage; (2) the love affair with Catherine Barkley (A Farewell to Arms), lacking marital bonds; (3) the affair with Maria (For Whom the Bell Tolls)--no promises to keep; (4)Nick Adams' breaking off the romance with Marjorie ("The End of Something") because it was getting too complicated; (5) Hemingway's own displeasure about the obligations of approaching parenthood, revealed in a comment to Gertrude Stein: "I'm too young to be a father." (6) the expatriates of World War I (Farewell to Arms and The Sun Also Rises), avoiding patriotic obligations during and after the war.

[7]His attitude toward war becomes modified during the Spanish Civil War.

female domination consistently throughout his life. He managed frequently to elude his mother's censorship. During the summer when he worked at farming jobs he would slowly read and reread the stories of sports, violence, and action printed in the newspaper used to wrap his lunches.[8] He conducted secret boxing bouts in his mother's music room. Many times it appeared that his father conspired with him to oppose her.

> When Ernest was three, his father gave him a fishing rod. His mother gave him a cello a few years later. Dr. Hemingway wanted his son to join him hunting in the woods on Sundays. His mother urged him to join her in the church choir. The boy was presented with a man-sized gun and taught to shoot when he was ten.[9]

Dr. Hemingway (though he was himself opposed to violence) gave his son permission to take boxing lessons when Ernest was fourteen.

In short, thanks to his father's influence, Hemingway's preoccupation in youth was with things all red-blooded young men are typically supposed to be interested in: hunting, fishing, boxing, guns, even a fictitious rifle club--certainly not music lessons and playing the cello. Ironically and happily, a talent for and keen interest in writing complemented the manly interests.

Then came the war. Of course Ernest wanted to go. However, his mother would not hear of it, and even his father preferred that he wait. As it turned out, everyone but Ernest was much relieved when the draft board turned him down because of defective

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[8]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 30.

[9]Singer, op. cit., p. 28.

vision.

Disappointed, but determined to see some action and get away from home (and his mother's skirts), Ernest ventured to Kansas and set himself up for his next rendezvous with death and violence by taking a job as a reporter on the Kansas City Star.

> Hemingway tore into the newspaper offices bent on doing a good job. He volunteered for all the ambulance and fire engine rides, appeared at the scene of murders, sat on the front row during court trials and reported city vice as he knew it and saw it. . . . all things connected with action, violence and disaster found Hemingway first at the scene, then at his typewriter.[10]

The pattern became set early--danger was his beat; wherever there were death and violence, Hemingway was there to report factually and with detailed accuracy in clear, precise terms, what he had observed of these his chosen subjects. Not only did his newspaper experience teach Hemingway how to write, to perfect that now famous style; but it activated his interest in seeking out and reporting his findings on violence--an interest which easily became an obsession after his own close brush with death on the Italian front.

The newspaper business was merely an interlude. Hemingway's real obsession was to get to the war. His opportunity came in the person of Ted Brumback, a Star reporter who had served in France as an ambulance driver for the American Red Cross Field Service just prior to joining the paper staff. Brumback, like Hemingway, had defective vision; but this handicap had not hindered his

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[10] Ibid., p. 43.

service with the Red Cross, and he was eager to return to the war. He had no trouble persuading Hemingway to join with him; and on May 12, 1918, Brumback and Hemingway received their Red Cross uniforms bearing the insignia of honorary lieutenants.[11] They and two friends who had joined with them were assigned to the Italian sector. Hemingway, eighteen, was the youngest man in his Red Cross Ambulance Unit.

Of course, Hemingway would not be content to remain within the bounds of safety. Pushing on to where the action was, he soon found plenty--more than he bargained for, in fact. He wangled a chance to operate a Red Cross canteen near the front lines and, after making friends with the commander in that area, actually pushed his way right into the front line trenches where he could learn firsthand how it felt to be under enemy attack. Then came the climax of his young life--Hemingway met death face to face!

The significance of Hemingway's experience on the Italian front lines cannot be overstressed, for it shaped his attitude toward life and death in a way that would remain constant for the rest of his life. This face-to-face encounter made Hemingway aware for the first time that death is real; that "it can happen to you." Death was put into personal perspective and from this moment was no longer a curiosity to lure Hemingway, but AN ADVERSARY, an enemy very real--with clutches very permanent! Hemingway perceived

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[11] Ibid., p. 46.

death for the first time to be the opposite of life. It was no longer a mere interest; it was now an opponent to be studied and conquered, a reality to be dealt with.

Here, relying mostly on Leicester Hemingway and letters from Hemingway himself, is an account of the incident. Early on the morning of July 9, 1918, Hemingway was distributing canteen supplies on the front lines when a mortar shell exploded very close.

> Of the four people nearest its point of impact, Ernest was the least seriously hit. One man was killed; another lost his legs; a third was badly injured. Ernest picked the injured man up and carried him to the rear. While doing this, he was hit twice by machine-gun bullets. In spite of the wounds, Ernest made it back to an aid station with the injured man on his back. Then he fainted.[12]

Ernest was hit hard and spent three months in hospitals recovering from his wounds. He spent five days in a field hospital before he could be moved to the base hospital at Milan. He underwent twelve operations to remove twenty-eight shell fragments and repair leg and knee damage from two hundred twenty-seven wounds from trench mortar and two machine gun bullets.

Writing home to his family about the war in general and this incident in particular, Ernest reported:

> . . . when there is a direct hit your pals get spattered all over you; spattered is literal. . . . The 227 wounds I got from the trench mortar didn't hurt a bit at the time, only my feet felt like I had rubber boots full of water on (hot water), and my knee cap was acting queer. The machine gun bullet just felt like a sharp smack on the leg with an icy snow ball. . . . They (the men at the aid station) couldn't figure out

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[12]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 40.

> how I had walked a hundred and fifty yards with such a load, with both knees shot thru, and my right shoe punctured in two big places; also over 200 flesh wounds. . . . My wounds are now hurting like 227 little devils driving nails into the raw. . . . I wouldn't really be comfortable now unless I had some pain.[13]

Hemingway's wounds, however, were much more than skin deep. The real wound he suffered, like countless soldiers before and since, was the traumatic shock of the experience. He was plagued by insomnia and could not sleep without a light in his room. To friend Guy Hickok he described his feelings when the mortar shell exploded: "I felt my soul or something coming right out of my body like you'd pull a silk handkerchief out of a pocket by one corner. It flew around and then came back and went in again and I wasn't dead any more."[14] (This feeling is to be echoed repeatedly by wounded heroes in Hemingway's stories.)

Charles Fenton makes this observation concerning the war experience:

> [Hemingway's wound] deepened his absorption in war as a temporary arena for the study of men . . . . Because of the shock of the wound, and the three months of enforced idleness, Hemingway was able to evaluate . . . the experiences he had endured and observed. The brevity of his service, he later concluded, was an advantage to him as an artist. "Any experience of war," he said in 1952, "is invaluable to a writer. But it is destructive if he has too much."[15]

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[13] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[14] Ibid., p. 48.

[15] Charles A. Fenton, The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (New York: New American Library, 1954), p. 61.

Though removed from the front lines, Hemingway continued to learn from the war. In the hospital at Milan he talked to other men who had survived the front. From a young English officer he learned some lines from Henry IV which he adopted as a part of his own emerging philosophy: "By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death . . . and let it go which way it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next."[16] Years later Hemingway summed up his reactions to men at war:

> When you go to war as a boy, you have a great illusion of immortality. Other people get killed; not you. . . . Then when you are badly wounded the first time you lose that illusion and you know it can happen to you. After being severely wounded . . . I had a bad time until I figured out that nothing could happen to me that had not happened to all men before me. Whatever I had to do all men had always done.[17]

"Courage?" Hemingway added, " . . . It is an impulse!"[18]

Hemingway paid dearly for his knowledge and insight; his courage, however, did not go unrewarded. After his convalescence, he got himself assigned to the Italian infantry and served with them until the end of the war. He was decorated for his bravery at Fossalta and thus returned home from the war in 1919 a hero at the ripe old age of nineteen, "the first wounded American to arrive

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[16] Ibid. This quotation later appears in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" as the strengthening power behind code hero Robert Wilson.

[17] Ibid., p. 62. Fenton is quoting from Ernest Hemingway, "Introduction," Men at War (Crown, 1942), pp. xiii-xiv.

[18] Singer, op. cit., p. 54.

home from the Italian front."[19] He obligingly entertained his eager listeners with the hypocritical and exaggerated stories they wanted to hear about the war and his wounds. (On one occasion he even flavored a speech before the high school assembly by holding up a pair of shrapnel-riddled trousers for the students to see.)[20] But Ernest Hemingway had been wounded far more deeply than anyone, including himself, realized. The confrontation with death had left him psychologically, emotionally scarred. He had met man's real enemy now, and the encounter had given him a jolt. This experience would take some digesting before Hemingway would again be "in control." Shortly before his death in 1961 Hemingway commented, "I can remember feeling so awful about the first war that I could not write about it for ten years. The wound combat makes in you is a very slow healing one."[21]

Typically, he soon tired of the "hero's life" and his mother's probing about future plans and her lectures about "what is sensible to do"--like marriage and a respectable job. To escape, Hemingway sought the peace and solitude of the Michigan woods to recover from the wounds of war and put himself in perspective. He spent a restless summer alone trying to reason out what had happened to him in the war. (In his stories we see him during this

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[19]Fenton, op. cit., p. 64.

[20]Alfred G. Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man (New York: Lancer Books, Inc., 1961), p. 45.

[21]Singer, op. cit., p. 61.

period as Nick Adams, fishing for trout but leery of "the swamp," which doubtless symbolizes death in the "Big Two-Hearted River" stories. Having just had one close brush with death, Hemingway [Nick] was not eager to seek out his adversary again just yet.)

In the period which followed, Hemingway returned to newspaper work, this time in Toronto, Canada, where he was associated with both the Star Weekly and its parent paper, the Daily Star. Gregory Clark, the Weekly's feature editor, took special interest in Hemingway and observed that he was enduring a chaotic interlude of adjustment at this time. "He was," as Clark later put it, "in the lonely confusion of trying to understand his past. He was trying to orient himself to the experiences he had been having."[22] Becoming absorbed once more in news reporting apparently helped Hemingway in his adjustment. His fascination with crime and violence was renewed. In fact, his final story for the Star Weekly, December 11, 1920, was an exploration of racketeers, much of his information having come from an ex-killer.[23] And later, upon his return to Chicago, his stories for the Chicago Tribune were further earmarked by his fascination with violence and death. He wrote of such subjects as "the mother who leaped to her death from a broken-down apartment house . . . the unidentified man found floating in Lake Michigan with half his head torn away by a dum-dum bullet."[24]

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[22]Fenton, loc. cit.

[23]Ibid., p. 81.

As it had been before the war, Hemingway was first at the scene of violence and then at his typewriter reporting with vivid precision what he had observed.

After his return from Canada, the breach between Hemingway and his family widened. He could not go along with the Victorian morality of his strict parents. His mother was temperamental and could never see any side to an argument but her own. His father was baffled by Ernest's refusal to settle down and by his independent behavior. In the summer of his coming of age, Hemingway fought openly with his parents, and on his twenty-first birthday he was dismissed from home.[25]

Having severed family ties, the rebel Hemingway began to mold a life of his own. In 1921 he married Hadley Richardson and received the Silver Medal of Military Valor (both of which acts made a favorable impression on his family). Then, having become bored with North America, he and his new wife set sail for Europe, with the agreement to mail dispatches to the Toronto Star. He carried letters of introduction written by Sherwood Anderson.[26]

One significant thing about this European venture is that Hemingway came under the influence of an expatriate group which played an important role in shaping some of his attitudes about

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[24]Singer, op. cit., p. 67.

[25]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., pp. 53-60.

[26]Ibid., pp. 63-66.

life and death. The group of disillusioned ones--the "lost generation," as Gertrude Stein chose to call them--had headquarters in Paris. "Montparnasse was the center of a high-powered, self-intoxicated cult of Dada, amorality and decadence, an insanity bred of endless groping toward the nada--nothingness."[27] Whether or not Hemingway himself wholly accepted their notions of life's emptiness and futility, this group later found their way into a number of his stories and novels. They depict a side of life he explored in his quest for the meaning of existence, the real meaning of life--or more pointedly--the meaning of death.[28] The obsession had begun to grow. Gertrude Stein, who observed Hemingway closely during this period of his life, commented, "He became obsessed with sex and violent death . . . for Hemingway everything became multiplied by and subtracted from sex and death. . . ."[29]

Another matter of importance to emerge from Hemingway's

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[27]Singer, op. cit., p. 76.

[28]Several critics (Maxwell Geismar among them) have interpreted Hemingway's pursuit of death as a self-destructive urge. Some of the obituaries printed at the time of the African plane crashes particularly played up the fact that he had sought death all his life. It was at that time that Hemingway lost patience with the critics. "Can one imagine," he said, "that if a man sought death all of his life he could not have found her before the age of fifty-four? It is one thing to be in the proximity of death, to know more or less what she is, and it is quite another thing to seek her. She is the most easy thing to find that I know of." (Aronowitz, pp. 206-207.) This thesis maintains that he did go in search of death, but not because of self-destructive impulses; quite to the contrary, what he really sought by his study of death was meaning for life.

[29]Aronowitz, op. cit., p. 107.

Paris tenure was his decision to give up journalism to become a full-fledged writer. Influenced by Anderson in America and Stein in Paris, he sharpened his style and developed an intense desire to write lasting novels. Newspaper work no longer satisfied him.[30] Hemingway wanted to become an author--a storyteller, a describer of life as he saw it. He wanted to write about life at its most intense moment--when it is lived in the presence of death. Thus, Hemingway became an author in search of a story, the story of life; but to find his story, he would first have to seek out death.

Despite his eagerness to abandon journalism, Hemingway in 1922 was still economically bound to newspaper work; however, his assignment to cover the Turkish-Greek conflict in Asia Minor "was ideal for a young writer who wanted to know more about violence."[31] Many of the scenes he saw in Constantinople and in Greece later found their way into many stories, fitting like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle into Hemingway's over-all portrait of death. As biographer Fenton observed, "The Asia Minor assignment gave Hemingway's understanding of war a depth impossible on the basis of his Italian experience alone."[32]

After the war one had to go to Spain or Africa to seek out death. Hemingway was not merely hunting animals in the African

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[30]Fenton, op. cit., pp. 116, 128.

[31]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 71.

[32]Fenton, op. cit., p. 147.

wilds: he was stalking his adversary, death, to get a clearer view, to examine at close range. Time after time he faced death in the savannas as he stalked lion, kudu, zebra, leopard, rhino, buffalo. Likewise, Spain proved a first-rate laboratory for the young author to study his chosen subject; for nowhere else was the drama of life versus death so vibrantly re-enacted at close range as seen from a barrera seat at the bullfighting arena. Day after day one could view death there with no physical danger to himself--not that Hemingway feared physical danger; he thrived on it and faced it repeatedly in the African savannas. But he ventured into the bullfighting arena only once, in the amateur fights at Pamplona. Of that adventure Kurt Singer writes:

> Hemingway faced the bulls in Pamplona, but with more bravery than grace. His career was short and ended with injuries. . . . Massive and round, Hemingway was built more like a bulldozer in the arena than a lithe bullfighter. . . . but he knew the sensation of seeing a ton of black ferocity bearing down. . . .[33]

The bullfights in Spain taught Hemingway much about death. Though he never became an expert bullfighter, he did become a known authority on the subject of bullfighting. And "already the young writer . . . was assuming legendary proportions as a man who symbolized courage and action, a man who examined death with the eye of a connoisseur."[34]

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[33]Singer, op. cit., p. 117.

[34]Milt Machlin, The Private Hell of Hemingway (New York: Paperback Library, Inc., 1962), p. 65.

Another profound and significant influence in molding Hemingway's attitude about death was the event of his father's suicide. On the morning of December 6, 1928, Dr. Hemingway without apparent forewarning, leveled a revolver at his head and pulled the trigger. Speculation was that failing health was the reason.[35] Whether there was sound reason or not, Hemingway could not accept any; to him, his father was a coward, and for years he could not even talk about the event. Thoughts of what his father had done filled Hemingway with disgust and revulsion; yet, some thirty-three years later, himself afflicted by failing health, Ernest Hemingway would similarly take his own life. Apparently his ideas regarding suicide underwent some change in those intervening years.

Hemingway was to suffer other disillusionment as three successive marriages failed. Hadley Richardson, Pauline Pfeiffer, Martha Gellhorn--each in turn found Hemingway's kind of life impossible and sought divorce. Hemingway experienced "the end of something" three times, and these blows had their effect on his attitudes about life. Only with Miss Mary (Mary Welsh) did he seem to find a secure, compatible relationship, although he always admired Pauline. Apparently she was his choice of the others.[36]

It had been with Pauline that Hemingway, lured by the call of danger and his love of the outdoors, had first gone to Key West

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[35]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., pp. 98-99. Leicester Hemingway adds that his father was also undergoing financial stress.

[36]Ibid., p. 245.

and then to Cuba to try big game fishing in the waters of the Gulf. He enjoyed the role of the big fisherman and had tremendous luck. He set several catch records, including the largest unmutilated tuna ever caught in the Bimini area (514 and 610 pounds) and the largest sailfish ever taken in the Atlantic Ocean on rod and reel (119½ pounds).[37] But his real fascination was with the big fish, the giant marlin--the champion of the deep. The marlin presented a challenge, and Hemingway savored the lure of the unknown which surrounded the reefs along the keys. The Gulf provided another arena in which to view danger and death close at hand, as near as the end of his fishing line.

Hemingway conquered the champion of the deep:

> In four days he took marlin of 330 pounds in twenty-five minutes, 364 pounds in thirty-two minutes, 540 pounds in thirty minutes, and 278 pounds in twenty-two minutes--all fairly hooked and in fighting trim.[38]

But he was not so successful in his battle against those despised scavengers of death, the sharks. He came to hate sharks with a passion, and in his works there are few villains more vicious than the sharks in The Old Man and the Sea. Hemingway's opinion was not favorably altered by an incident that happened while he was out on a fishing excursion with friends. Hemingway was trying to kill a shark when the bullet intended for the shark's head ricocheted off

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[37] Ibid., pp. 165, 151.

[38] Ibid., p. 168.

the edge of the boat, splintering into fragments which lacerated the calves of both his legs with the bulk of the bullet lodging in his left leg.[39] "Disgusted at having been possibly the first man ever shot by a shark, Hemingway chalked up another grudge mark against these hyenas of the sea."[40]

Not only did Hemingway learn about death from the sea, but his associations with bartenders, bootleggers, gamblers, and roughnecks who operated along the waterfronts of Key West and Havana during the depression years taught him other lessons about living and dying. Night life on the waterfront was filled with drinking and fist fighting and exposure to violence--all of which became a part of later stories and a novel, To Have and Have Not.

Because of the great amount of time Hemingway had spent in Europe, in Africa, on the Florida keys, and in Cuba, he was often labeled "expatriate," a term he did not like. Nevertheless, Hemingway did spend so much time outside the United States and alone (to himself or in his own little world with its limited population) that it would seem that he suffered patriotic disillusionment also. He almost forsook patriotic duty; he accepted no entanglements of citizenship (as he likewise shunned all other entanglements in everyday living). "I don't feel any romance for the American scene," he told his brother. "It doesn't move me."[41]

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[39] Ibid., p. 165.

[40] Machlin, op. cit., p. 115.

During this period he wanted no part of anyone's wars. However, his attitude was destined to change with the advent of the Spanish Civil War. Hemingway, in fact, could not stay away.

As war correspondent for a large news syndicate, he made four trips to Europe to view the Spanish conflict--interested this time not so much in the study of death as in the cause the people were fighting for. Of course, death was present; and what Hemingway saw of it on the battlefields and in the towns hit him with tremendous impact. The mass slaying of a group of Italians who had thought they were being sent to Africa for garrison duty; the stench of death so strong that the burial squad wore gas masks while doing their work; the violent death of a lovely, innocent girl when a tank struck a stalled car; the execution of a good and innocent man; the children lying dead, their "small, white faces--like stepped-on flowers . . . so innocent and pure, and forever thrown away"--these were scenes Hemingway could not forget.[42] Hemingway came home from the war; but "he had, in a sense, left a part of himself in Spain." His brother comments that Hemingway "began to feel that there must be a great novel buried in the treachery, courage, and sacrifice that he had seen"[43] during the months in Spain. The scars of his first disillusionment having

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[41] Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 154.

[42] Ibid., pp. 176-191.

[43] Ibid., p. 191.

healed, Hemingway could now believe (along with Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls) that there were causes worth dying for.

With this new attitude, Hemingway became a vigorous participant in World War II. Using his own boat, Pilar, he risked life and limb carrying out anti-submarine missions and various other naval assignments in the Caribbean. When those missions ended, he signed as a correspondent to cover the war in Europe; but he neglected his journalistic duties to become involved in the real fighting. A severe head injury in an automobile accident did not hinder his participation in the Normandy invasion; he was in one of the first boats to land. Without orders, he had attached himself to the Twenty-Second Regiment of the Fourth Division and found his way into the thick of the battle. Later he organized his own guerilla warfare to help in the liberation of Paris.[44] Hemingway survived World War II (though obituaries about him were prepared after the automobile crash which had thrown Hemingway from the back seat of the car through the windshield),[45] and he was awarded a bronze star for bravery and "for superior job of intelligence reporting in the action around Rambouillet."[46] Most important, however, he had finally found a war that made sense.

In addition to his change of attitude about death in war,

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[44]Machlin, op. cit., pp. 170-174.

[45]Leicester Hemingway, op. cit., p. 215.

[46]Singer, op. cit., p. 172.

a new side of Hemingway emerged from these last conflicts (the Spanish War and World War II), a new attitude to complement his return to humanity. Jim Bishop, war editor for Colliers and thus Hemingway's "boss" during the war, summed it up this way:

> Hemingway was our French correspondent after D-Day. That's when the soldiers began to call him Papa. He talked tough and he slept with hand grenades and bandoliers under his bed, but he began to wear steel-rimmed spectacles and grew a white beard.
>
> The thing he tried to kill, and couldn't, was pity. When a wounded soldier cried with pain, Ernest Hemingway blinked behind his glasses, and his soul wept.
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> He loved men and was at his best with them.[47]

The Spanish Civil War and World War II did much to mellow Hemingway in his attitudes about mankind and about death.

Though the battle with death in the war ended, the match continued for several more rounds. A serious eye infection threatened his life in 1949. While he was duck shooting near Venice, a tiny particle of gunshot wadding became lodged in his eye; and by the time Hemingway realized the seriousness of the injury several days later, a form of blood poisoning had set in. The doctors feared for his life, but death was thwarted again--this time with the help of a reported "sixteen million units of penicillin."[48] He had barely recovered from this experience when another near tragedy took place in the Gulf Stream on the deck of the Pilar. During heavy seas Hemingway took a bad fall on the wet deck, sustaining

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[47]Jim Bishop, article in the Charlotte Observer, July 10, 1961.

[48]Aronowitz, op. cit., p. 200.

a concussion and a five-inch cut on the back of his head that went into the bone and severed the artery. With surgical help at least five hours away, it was only by a miracle that Mary and friend Roberto Herrerra were able to contain the hemorrhage and thereby save his life.[49]

Of all the bouts between death and "the champ," however, the most dramatic encounter was the African plane crashes in 1954. (Not only was this Hemingway's most narrow escape since Fossalta, but it is the incident most romanticized and built up to heroic proportions by his biographers [excluding Leicester Hemingway], no two of whom agree on the details of the happening.) In January of 1954, returning from safari in Africa as correspondents for Look magazine, Hemingway and Miss Mary were victims of not one plane crash, but two. The first crash occurred in the Murchison Falls area when pilot Roy Marsh was forced to dive to avoid a flock of ibis and struck an abandoned telegraph line. The wreckage was spotted from the air and the license number reported. Early news editions carried the story of the crash in an inaccessible spot in Africa; Hemingway was feared dead. Meanwhile, Hemingway, Mary, and their pilot had climbed out of the wreckage and made camp in an abandoned poacher's shack, where they spent an uneasy night surrounded by a herd of unfriendly elephants. Finally making their way to the river, they were able by sheer luck to get a boat lift

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[49]Machlin, op. cit., p. 184.

on the SS Murchison Falls, which just happened to be making its once-a-month trip down the river to Butiabe at Lake Albert. Considering themselves rescued, the Hemingways and their pilot chartered another plane to take them to Entebbe, the capital of Uganda. Unbelievable and improbable as it may sound, the "rescue" plane crashed and exploded on take-off. "The fire," one biographer records in his vivid account of the accident, "with its twirling black smoke was a signal of Hemingway's death."[50] Newspapers all over the world carried front page headlines of the fatal tragedy:

HEMINGWAY PLANE LOST OVER AFRICA
DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON
HEMINGWAY AND WIFE DEAD
HEMINGWAY MISSING
HEMINGWAY BURNED IN PLANE CRASH
FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

While teletypes and radio beams carried the news of his death and obituaries were being hastily prepared for editorial pages, the indestructible Hemingways and their pilots again managed to climb out of the wreckage and the flames. Hemingway later commented, "Miss Mary had never seen a plane burn before, and that is a very impressive sight--especially when you're in the plane."[51] After the brush fire had been brought under control, the Hemingways finally reached Entebbe--by truck--one hundred eighty-five miles away and were admitted to the hospital there. Mary had suffered

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[50] Singer, op. cit., p. 200.

[51] Ibid., p. 201.

two broken ribs. Hemingway's chart read as follows:

Suffering from:
jammed spine
ruptured right kidney
injured liver
collapsed intestine
concussion
probable eye impairment
second and third degree burns[52]

One of the doctors said that Hemingway should have died immediately after the accident. "Since you did not, you should have died when you got those brush fire burns. However, since you are still alive, you won't die any more if you will be a good guy." The author's reply: "Indeed, I will make a fine corpse one day. I don't expect to live more than five years more and I have to hurry."[53] Yes, he should have died in that last accident--two or three times--but the champ persisted, determined not to yield to his adversary just yet. Death was thwarted again. And Hemingway had a good chuckle reading his own obituaries.

Hemingway would probably have gone on defying death, but age and great physical wear and tear conspired against him. Death met his stubbornest and most dedicated student for the last time on July 2, 1961, in the foyer of Hemingway's Idaho home, when Hemingway, as had his father before him, put his favorite gun to his head, looked death straight in the eye, and pulled the trigger.

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[52] Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[53] Ibid., p. 205.

CHAPTER IV

A PORTRAIT OF DEATH

"I don't know what kind of interview you want," Hemingway told writer Kurt Singer in Cuba in 1959. "My life is told in my books."[1] In his recent biography of Hemingway, Singer elaborates on that comment:

> Anyone who wants to understand Hemingway the man must know Hemingway the writer. His world is in his books, his characters are real, people he has known . . . .[2]
>
> To understand the man Hemingway, one must understand his own world of realism from whence comes his indelicate treatment of sex, crimes, human frailties, and bloody horrors. . . . the Moment of Truth in the bull ring, the final K. O. in a fight are not the ends in themselves. Behind them is the psychological agony of action and death, painted in words with the same precision with which Rembrandt used his brushes and oils.[3]

From his biographical encounters with death in Europe, in Africa, in America, and in the Caribbean, Hemingway was able to paint verbally vivid pictures of what he had felt and seen. All that Hemingway learned about death in a lifetime of pursuing the subject and the attitudes he formulated about death at various periods in his life are recorded in his works. Biographers may in their recounting of his life give some enlightenment about the man

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[1] Kurt Singer, Hemingway: Life and Death of a Giant (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1961), p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 66.

[3] Ibid., p. 97.

and his legend, but the most accurate record of the inner man--his attitudes, his thoughts, his feelings--was written by Hemingway himself. For, as he himself so pointedly admitted to Kurt Singer in 1959, his works are his autobiography.

Out of a lifetime of study came a detailed portrait of death, revealing even the feelings one has at that moment when "life goes down in defeat."[4] His best stories and the most graphic scenes in his novels are equal in artistry to paintings by Rembrandt or Goya, for many of his representations are like portraits framed in danger against a backdrop of death. To read Hemingway is to walk through a tremendous gallery of word paintings. The scenes are different--a battlefield, a hospital room, a bridge, a bullfighting arena, the ocean depths, the plains of Africa, the Spanish hills, an Alpine village--but the subject is always the same. And the pictures in this museum of death share another likeness: the death is always violent, and its effect on those who manage to escape and on those who merely watch is frequently traumatic.

I. SCENES OF DEATH IN THE WAR

As a young ambulance driver, Hemingway was deeply impressed by scenes of death in World War I--first at Fossalta, where he suffered his own traumatic experience, and then in the Turkish-Greek conflict in Asia Minor. Having been exposed for the first

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[4] An early view which Hemingway modified as he studied death and sought a philosophy of life.

time to the shocking horrors of war, Hemingway, with his unique writing skill, was able verbally to sketch unforgettable pictures of what he had seen and felt, so that even those who had not been on the battlefield could know the monstrous tragedy that is death in war.

> It has always seemed to me that war has been omitted as a field for the observations of the naturalist. . . . Can we not hope to furnish the reader with a few rational and interesting facts about the dead? I hope so.[5]

Those are the opening lines of "A Natural History of the Dead," Hemingway's most thoroughgoing treatment in the short story of death in the war. He opens this bitterly ironic and satirical exposé with an anecdote about a traveler near death in a remote African desert who draws inspiration to go on from a small moss-flower which catches his eye. Using the words of that traveler, Mungo Park, as a springboard, Hemingway sets the stage for his story:

> "Can that Being who planted, watered and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and suffering of creatures formed after his own image?" . . . can any branch of Natural History be studied without increasing that faith, love and hope which we . . . need in our journey through the wilderness of life? Let us therefore see what inspiration we may derive from the dead.[6]

He then ironically "inspires" the reader with an almost derisive

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[5]"A Natural History of the Dead," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 440. All page references to short stories in this chapter are from this source.

[6]Ibid., pp. 440-441.

delineation of the ruthlessness and ugliness that characterize death in war.

The dead are usually male; therefore the sight of a dead woman is quite shocking. He first saw dead women after a factory explosion in Milan, having been assigned to the duty of searching for the dead--or more accurately, for remnants of the dead. On the return ride "through the beautiful Lombard countryside," the men chat pleasantly, commenting on the "extraordinary business" of collecting body parts and noting particularly how the blown-apart bodies divided capriciously rather than following anatomical lines. They also remark that the disaster was "robbed" of a greater horror by the fact that there were no wounded (the implication being that it is better to be dead than wounded; at least the dead will neither suffer nor have to live out their lives with mangled bodies).

The dead are usually male, but that fact is not necessarily true of animals. Hemingway has seen dead mares. However, the study of dead mules he found especially interesting. Dead mules along mountain roads, where they had been thrown down steep slopes to clear the passage, looked less incongruous there than on the quay at Smyrna, where the retreating Greeks broke the legs of their baggage animals and pushed them into the river to drown. "The numbers of broken-legged mules and horses drowning in the shallow water called for a Goya to depict them."[7] (He then points out the

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[7] Ibid., p. 441.

impossibility of that idea, Goya having been "long dead"; but by this time the reader is, or soon will be, convinced that the verbal portrayal of the scene by America's literary Goya is sufficiently vivid.)

Hemingway next uses his word brushes to depict in full color the physiognomy of death:

> Until the dead are buried they change somewhat in appearance each day. The color change in Caucasian races is from white to yellow, to yellow-green, to black. If left long enough in the heat the flesh comes to resemble coal-tar. . . . The dead grow larger each day until sometimes they become quite too big for their uniforms. . . . and faces fill as taut and globular as balloons. The surprising thing . . . is the amount of paper that is scattered about the dead. . . . The heat, the flies, the indicative positions of the bodies in the grass, and the amount of paper scattered are the impressions one retains.[8]

However, he cannot recall the smell of death. He can remember that there was such a smell, but "nothing ever happens to you to bring it back."[9] (In a later novel, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Hemingway explores this facet of death in detail.) He then goes on to make the observation that men die like animals, at least most men do.

The story closes with the recounting of an incident about a living man who was laid with the dead because the doctor felt that there was no hope for him and had no room for him in the first aid quarters. The man's head was "broken as a flower-pot may be broken, although it was all held together by membranes and a skillfully

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[8] Ibid., p. 443.

[9] Ibid., p. 444.

applied bandage now soaked and hardened, with the structure of his brain disturbed by a piece of broken steel in it."[10] The officer in charge of artillery asks the doctor to end mercifully the man's misery with an overdose of morphine. When the doctor refuses, needing the morphine for surgery, the officer wants to shoot the dying man. The doctor is against that, too, but he still will not concern himself with doing anything for the man. The two men have a violent quarrel which climaxes with the doctor's throwing a saucer of iodine in the lieutenant's face. Just at that moment word comes that the wounded man has died. "See, my poor lieutenant?" the doctor remarks. "We dispute about nothing. In time of war we dispute about nothing."[11] The lieutenant painfully screams that he has been blinded by the iodine in his eyes. Thus ends this little story of "inspiration." "Can that Being . . . look with unconcern upon the situation and suffering of creatures formed after his own image?" The story hits like a saucer full of iodine, and the seeming unconcern of the doctor makes us wonder. A man's life is nothing--"in time of war." But rather than blinding us, Hemingway has in reality opened our eyes to the horrors of war and has laid the groundwork for our understanding something of the disillusionment that spiritually and emotionally blinded so many of the men and women who actually lived through those horrors.

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[10] Ibid., p. 446.

[11] Ibid., p. 449.

In other stories Hemingway reinforces the scenes of death in war that he has pictured in "A Natural History of the Dead." "On the Quai at Smyrna," for example, pictures death on every side: dead babies, dead women, and the dead mules floating in the shallow water. The women on the quay refuse to give up their dead babies, though some of them have been dead for six days. An old woman dies right before the eyes of the young soldier who was asked to look at her:

> [she] was lying on a sort of litter. They said, "Will you have a look at her, sir?" So I had a look at her and just then she died and went absolutely stiff. Her legs drew up and she drew up from the waist and went quite rigid. I told a medical chap about it and he told me it was impossible.[12]

The story "A Way You'll Never Be" describes another scene that Hemingway enlarged upon in "A Natural History of the Dead": the dead lay alone or in clumps, and around each there was scattered paper; there was always much paper about the dead; the bodies were humped and swollen; there were flies.[13]

There are other tableaux. What is death like in the war? Death in the war is rain and dead leaves and an execution of cabinet ministers against the hospital wall. There were six of them. One sick with typhoid had to be carried out and propped up.[14] Death in the war is a look of surprise on the face of the victim.

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[12]"On the Quai at Smyrna," p. 88.

[13]"A Way You'll Never Be," p. 402.

[14]"Chapter V" from In Our Time, p. 127.

The scene is a wall. The soldiers are shooting Germans as they climb over the wall. The first one "looked awfully surprised" when they "potted him." Three others were shot the same way, just as they got one leg over the wall.[15] In still another scene two Hungarians are shot while backing a wagon out of an alley after robbing a cigar store.[16]

But it is a little scene called "L'Envoi" (The Postscript), which appeared in the short story collection In Our Time, that capsules the most vital lesson Hemingway had thus far learned from the war. The king and queen of Greece are isolated from the war in their pleasant garden where the queen trims her rose bushes and the king has a "jolly time" entertaining his guests. They make light talk of the war, the king supposing that in time of war it is necessary and right to shoot certain people (cabinet ministers perhaps). Then, showing unexpected insight into the matter, the king makes the point that is indeed a fitting postscript to the many stories of death and violence contained in In Our Time: "Of course the great thing in this sort of an affair is not to be shot oneself!"[17] Here is the embryo of an attitude that was conceived at Fossalta when Hemingway was so critically wounded only a week after his first visit to the front-line trenches--an attitude that will grow

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[15] "Chapter III" from In Our Time, p. 105.

[16] "Chapter VIII" from In Our Time, p. 155.

[17] "L'Envoi" from In Our Time, p. 233.

and change as Hemingway pursues his study of death. Momentarily, however, the great thing in life (as it was in the war)--the real secret of living--is not to get killed.

Hemingway later immortalized that experience at Fossalta and the lesson it taught in one of his most acclaimed novels, A Farewell to Arms. The hero of the novel, Lt. Frederic Henry (who, incidentally, bears striking resemblance to Ernest Hemingway), and several other men are eating and talking in a trench on the Italian front when suddenly a mortar shell explodes right on top of them. Lt. Henry describes that moment:

> . . . there was a flash as when a blast-furnace door is swung open, and a roar that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind. I went swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. I breathed and I was back.[18]

Like Hemingway, Lt. Henry escaped death but sustained severe knee injuries. Other men were not so fortunate. In the ambulance en route to the hospital after the incident, Lt. Henry becomes aware that the man in the stretcher above him is hemorrhaging. One of Hemingway's most poignant descriptions of death follows. Lt. Henry cannot see the man, but death's presence is felt in the drops of

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[18] Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 54. One recalls Hemingway's personal account of this same experience: "I died then. I felt my soul, or something, coming right out of my body, like you'd pull a silk handkerchief out of a pocket by one corner. It flew around and then came back in again and I wasn't dead any more."

blood that fall from the stretcher in the slings above on Lt. Henry below. Lt. Henry's thoughts:

> I felt something dripping. At first it dropped slowly and regularly, then it pattered into a stream. . . . The stream kept on. In the dark I could not see where it came from the canvas overhead. I tried to move sideways so that it did not fall on me. Where it had run down under my shirt it was warm and sticky. . . . After a while the stream from the stretcher above lessened and started to drip again and I heard and felt the canvas above move as the man on the stretcher settled more comfortably. . . .
>
> "He's dead I think," I said.
>
> The drops fell very slowly, as they fall from an icicle after the sun has gone. It was cold in the car in the night as the road climbed. At the post on the top they took the stretcher out and put another in and we went on.[19]

And later, in the field hospital, Lt. Henry continues to be made aware of death's reality and finality.

> If any one were going to die they put a screen around the bed so you could not see them die, but only the shoes and puttees of doctors and men nurses showed under the bottom of the screen and sometimes at the end there would be whispering. . . . and someone folded the screen and took it away. . . . you could look out of the window and see the new graves in the garden.[20]

Thus young Lt. Henry learned what death in war was all about as death became a very real thing that "can happen to you." After his wounds (physical wounds, that is) had healed, he returned to the front lines, taking with him new insight into this thing called war--insight he reveals under pressure on an assignment:

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[19] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

[20] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

> All I had to do was to get to Pordenone with three ambulances. I had failed at that. All I had to do now was get to Pordenone. I probably could not even get to Udine. The hell I couldn't. The thing to do was to be calm and not get shot or captured.[21]

Postscript: "Of course the great thing in this sort of an affair is not to be shot oneself!" Later Lt. Henry will learn--as everyone does--that death does not confine itself to the battlefield; and there are many ways a person can die--shooting being only one; and a person can die many times--daily, in fact. In short, Lt. Henry, there is no escape. But those lessons are still in the future for a young soldier who has just had the scare of his life and who is on his way to Pordenone.

II. SCENES OF DEATH IN SPAIN

Hemingway's love affair with Spain began after World War I, when he went there to study death and to perfect his skills as a writer. His mind scarred by memories of the scenes of death he had witnessed in the war (men stripped of their dignity, suffering, crying with pain, dying like animals), Hemingway found it nauseating to think that there was no more to life than coming to such an ignoble end. He needed assurance that life held more than this, and Spain with her practical-minded, life-loving people promised that assurance. Hemingway's affection for the Spanish people lasted all his life and was a factor in his returning to Spain a

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[21] Ibid., p. 212.

number of years later to participate in their civil war. Each of Hemingway's Spanish experiences added another dimension to his growing portrait of death. Likewise, they add much to a growing understanding of Hemingway, as his artistry with words again captures vivid scenes of death.

The Arena of Death

> The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bull ring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it. I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things, and one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death.[22]

The study of death in the bullfighting arena did much to restore meaning, dignity, and beauty to the matter of dying by removing humiliation and ugliness so that facing death--even dying itself--becomes an art. Death is elevated to epic proportions in the ring, where it is played out in a spectacular drama--not in the rain among dead leaves in the mud--but in the sun. Again using his word brushes, Hemingway crystalizes glorious moments of courage and triumph over death in the afternoon.

The first scene is painted from a seat not too near the ring from which one can view the entire spectacle of the fight. The two main characters in this drama of death are the bull and the man, but even from a distance the spectator is aware of a third major presence in the ring, the real antagonist for both the bull and the

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[22]Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 2.

man--DEATH: certain death for the bull; constant danger of death for the man. The drama is played in three acts: (1) the trial, (2) the sentencing, and (3) the execution.

Act One is "the act of the capes, the pics and the horses." In this act the bull is "the star," as he exhibits his bravery or cowardice by charging the picadors in the trial of the lances. The bull has all his victories in Act One, and when the president signals the end of the act and the bugles blow signaling the picadors to leave the ring, it appears that the bull has won: "he has cleared the ring of mounted men and is alone."

Act Two features the banderillas, pairs of harpoon-shaped, tipped sticks, placed two at a time in the humped muscle of the neck to slow up the bull and regulate the carriage of his head "so that his attack will be slower, but surer and better directed." Within five minutes four pairs of these must be properly placed at one side or the other to correct the bull's tendency to hook to that side. In the second act the bull, baffled completely by an unarmed man and very cruelly punished by the banderillas, loses his confidence and his blind general rage and concentrates his hatred on an individual object.

Act Three is "the death." The matador appears with sword and muleta in this final act, which is itself divided into three parts: (1) salutation of the president, (2) dedication of the death of the bull, and (3) the kill—preceded by the matador's work with the muleta. "In the third act he [the bull] is faced by only one

man who must, alone, dominate him by a piece of cloth placed over a stick, and kill him from in front." The climax of the bullfight is the final sword thrust, the actual encounter between the man and the animal, what the Spanish call "the moment of truth," and every move in the fight is to prepare the bull for that killing.[23]

That is the total spectacle of death seen from a distance. Now Hemingway narrows and at the same time enlarges the view (like using a zoom lens on a camera) by moving up to a barrera seat ring side for a closer view of death in the arena. Only from a barrera seat can one see and feel the action to the extent that he vicariously experiences the sensations of the fight and can come to fully understand and appreciate the stages of the ritual, from the comic deaths of the horses to the "moment of truth" when both man and bull face death in the at once fatal and triumphant moment of the kill.

Scenes from a barrera seat are not always pleasant. Certain gruesome aspects of the fight which were partially unnoticed before now come sharply into focus. "The horse's entrails hung down in a blue bunch and swung backward and forward as he began to canter. . . . Blood pumped regularly from between the horse's front legs,"[24] as the picador whipped and spurred the horse to make him face the bull. Such scenes of cruelty are hard to justify to those who are

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[23] Ibid., pp. 96-98.

[24] "Chapter X" from In Our Time, p. 165.

not aficionados of bullfighting. Hemingway calls the death of the horses "comic," not meaning that it is in any way amusing, but that it is lacking in dignity. It is a "comic" death as opposed to a "tragic" death. The horse's death is not his tragedy; his tragedy occurred when he was sold for use in the arena. In the ring the horse is an object of pity. Tragic death neither arouses pity nor lacks dignity.[25]

In sharp contrast to the comic death of the horses is the sacrificial death of the bull, wherein lies the tragedy of the bullfight. For the death to be tragic, the bull must be brave, and his courage (or lack of it) can be sensed unmistakably from the barrera seat.

> The truly brave bull gives no warning before he charges except the fixing of his eye on his enemy, the raising of the crest of muscle in his neck, the twitching of an ear, and, as he charges, the lifting of his tail. A completely brave bull . . . will never open his mouth . . . during the course of the entire fight and, at the finish, with the sword in him, will come toward the man while his legs support him, his mouth tight shut to keep the blood in.[26]

The bull that paws the ground, snorts, threatens with the horns, or bellows is a coward--hoping by these warnings to frighten his opponent and avoid combat if possible.

Hemingway the artist brings together in a splendid sketch the two major figures in the drama of death, a brave man and a

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[25] Death in the Afternoon, pp. 6-7. Pity, as used here, implies "slightly contemptuous sorrow or feelings of pathos."

[26] Ibid., p. 124.

brave bull, and captures precisely the "moment of truth" for the man and the simultaneous moment of death for the bull. The scene is, of course, seen from a barrera seat:

> If it happened right down close in front of you, you could see Villalta snarl at the bull and curse him, and when the bull charged he swung back firmly like an oak when the wind hits it, his legs tight together, the muleta trailing and the sword following the curve behind. Then he cursed the bull, flopped the muleta at him, and swung back from the charge his feet firm, the muleta curving and at each swing the crowd roaring.
>
> When he started to kill it was all in the same rush. The bull looking at him straight in front, hating. He drew out the sword from the folds of the muleta and sighted with the same movement and called to the bull, Toro! Toro! and the bull charged and Villalta charged and just for a moment they became one. Villalta became one with the bull and then it was over. Villalta standing straight and the red hilt of the sword sticking out dully between the bull's shoulders. Villalta, his hand up at the crowd and the bull roaring blood, looking straight at Villalta and his legs caving.[27]

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[27]"Chapter XII" from In Our Time, p. 181. In a discussion of the matador and the crucified as two dominant motifs which run through Hemingway's works, Melvin Backman has pointed out Hemingway's unusual blending of sex and death symbolism. He draws an analogy between the "moment of truth" in the bull ring--when the matador and the bull "are united for a single instant by death"--and sexual union. "Both are experiences of controlled violence that demand a tight holding on of self until the last moment, then the yielding, merging, and flooding ecstasy. . . . While the killing of the bull ends in union, the making of love, as Hemingway has often remarked, becomes a kind of killing, the good killing." Backman also refers to the death imagery that appears in the famous love scene in For Whom the Bell Tolls: a dark passage to nowhere, the sensation of flying, the soul going out of the body and up, up, up, to unknowing nowhere, time absolutely still, the earth moving out and away--all of which equally describe sexual union or death. Furthermore, the movement of the earth, first associated with love, is later used in the same novel in a description of death. (The boy Joaquin felt the earth move out from under him as the bombs fell at El Sordo's camp.) The sensation of flying parallels the plane ride in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" which, in that story, symbolizes death. "It is this twining of sex and death," Backman continues,

So much for sight impressions of death in the arena. In the next portrait Hemingway is concerned with the emotional impact of the fight as he explains the reason men are willing to risk death daily in the ring and the compulsion that daily draws the people there to watch them do it. Bullfighting produces an intangible ecstasy which belongs to the matador but is shared by the spectators and has no equal in any other kind of spectator "sport." (A similar excitement is produced in games and true spectator sports in which the crowd cheer for victory and identify closely with their team or favorite. The difference is that in games defeat has been substituted for death. The thrill of the "sport" is intensified in the bull ring, where the danger is not once-removed by symbolism.)

> . . . the essence of the greatest emotional appeal of bullfighting is the feeling of immortality that the bullfighter feels in the middle of a great faena[28] and that he gives to the spectators. He is performing a work of art and he is playing

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"both fundamental crises of life, that is central to Hemingway's work," as he presents love as "a mystic ceremonial experience" and killing "(killing cleanly with honor, pride, and humility) as a spiritual experience." ("The Matador and the Crucified," Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, pp. 248-251.)

Not included in Backman's discussion are still other parallels. Robert Jordan acknowledges the spiritual death involved in love when he says of his profound love for Maria, " . . . I love her so that I feel, literally, as though I would die." (For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 166.) Later in the same book Pilar speaks of sexual union as being both the birth and death of man. (p. 256) And in Across the River and into the Trees, Colonel Cantwell makes this observation about his love for Renata: "He only thought of her and how she felt and how close life comes to death when there is ecstasy." (p. 219).

[28] Faena refers to the matador's total work with the muleta.

> with death, bringing it closer, closer, closer, to himself, a death that you know is in the horns because you have the canvas-covered bodies of the horses on the sand to prove it. He gives the feeling of his immortality, and as you watch it, it becomes yours. Then when it belongs to both of you, he proves it with the sword.[29]

But the matador, though he may often create the illusion of immortality is not immortal. "All stories, if continued far enough, end in death . . . ."[30] Hemingway's matadors also die, a number of them in the ring; and in describing their last moments of life or their narrow escapes, he adds still another bit to the over-all portrait of death itself. What does death look like? Matador Luis Freg knows:

> The last time he was given up for dead at Barcelona, torn open terribly, . . . delirious and dying, . . . he said, "I see death. I see it clearly. Ayee. Ayee. It is an ugly thing." He saw death clearly, but it did not come. . . . He was marked for death for twenty years and death never took him.[31]

What does it feel like to die? Here is what it was like for one of Spain's greatest matadors:

> Maera lay still, his head on his arms, his face in the sand. He felt warm and sticky from the bleeding. Each time he felt the horn coming. . . . Once the horn went all the way through him and he felt it go into the sand. . . . Then the bull was gone. Some men picked Maera up and started to run with him . . . to the infirmary. They laid Maera down on a cot and one of the men went for the doctor. The others stood around. . . . Maera felt everything getting larger and larger and then smaller and smaller. Then everything commenced to run faster and faster as when they speed up a cinematograph film. Then he was dead.[32]

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[29] Death in the Afternoon, p. 213.

[30] Ibid., p. 122.

[31] Ibid., p. 264.

So, death comes in Spain as it had come in the war. All is not always beauty and grace and courage and victory in the world of the bull ring. There are danger and fear and wounding--and death. Scenes of death in the arena are not, after all, far different from scenes of death on the battlefield. It is only that the Spanish have learned how to master their fear, how to live with this adversary that would rob life of its dignity and meaning.

Death in the Spanish Hills

The Spanish, being practical people having much common sense, "are interested in death and do not spend their lives avoiding the thought of it and hoping it does not exist only to discover it when a dozen or so years later they come to die."[33]

When Hemingway returned to Spain, a dozen or so years later, the scene had shifted from the bull ring to the hill country; and instead of matadors, the heroes were guerilla fighters, battling not for their own lives but for the life of their republic. Amidst scenes of death in the Spanish hills, Hemingway added a new truth to his philosophy about living and dying and at the same time added still another dimension to his portrait of death.

In For Whom the Bell Tolls Hemingway revives the theme of war, but the real subject of this his longest novel is death. In the shadow of every tree, between the lines of every conversation,

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[32]"Chapter XIV" from In Our Time, p. 207.

[33]Death in the Afternoon, p. 265.

in the silence of unspoken thoughts--death lurks on every page. For the Spanish guerillas and the American soldier, Robert Jordan, death is a daily threat. They are like matadors in an arena of war: a bridge rather than a bull confronts them, but they all know that the danger of death will be there at the bridge as it always is present in the horns of the bull. The guerillas face death at every turn as did the soldiers in World War I, but with notable differences: (1) The sickening fear of death has been supplanted by a healthy zest for life. The Spanish accept the reality of death; they discuss death daily; they have studied it in the bull ring. They (with the exception of Pablo) do not fear dying, but they do hate to give up living. Though they talk much of death, their real preoccupation is with life--making the most of each precious moment. (2) The attitude of self-preservation at all costs ("the great thing in this sort of an affair is not to be shot oneself") has been replaced by willingness to sacrifice self for the good of the cause. The soldier now views the possibility of his death in relation to how it will serve the cause. (3) Preoccupation with self has been absorbed by a larger awareness of humanity, as is suggested by the title of the book. A man hates war not merely because of what it necessitates that he do to others. Man has become aware of his kinship with the human race, a brotherhood that includes even one's enemies.

One comes to expect irony in a Hemingway title. <u>For Whom the Bell Tolls</u> is no exception. Though the title suggests a theme

of brotherhood, there is little love of humanity shown in the book. In fact, what are apt to be remembered longest are scenes of violence and shocking brutality which testify to man's inhumanity to man. Scenes such as these described by the gypsy woman, Pilar, are not motivated by feelings of brotherly love:

The guerillas, led by Pablo (who had not yet lost his courage and his taste for death), had taken a certain town. After they had blown up the barracks and killed the wounded, they executed four guards who had surrendered:

> . . . the four knelt, looking very awkward with their heads against the wall and their hands by their sides, and Pablo passed behind them and shot each in turn in the back of the head with the pistol, going from one to another and putting the barrel of the pistol against the back of their heads, each man slipping down as he fired. . . . Only one put his hands in front of his eyes, and he was the last one, and the four bodies were slumped against the wall when Pablo turned away from them and came toward us with the pistol still in his hand.[34]

Shortly thereafter the sun rose; it was, as it turned out, a day of death. More than twenty other fascists were captured and killed, but no others were shot as the guards had been. That was too merciful by Pablo's standards. "Pablo had them beaten to death with flails and thrown from the top of the cliff into the river."[35]

Pablo had all the townspeople line up in two lines and made the prisoners march one at a time between them--to be beaten and then thrown over the cliff and into the river below. The Mayor,

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[34]Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 102.

[35]Ibid., p. 103.

Don Benito Garcia, "his head up, his fat face gray, his eyes looking ahead . . . and walking steadily,"[36] was the first to go. He was followed by Don Frederico, who could not get his legs to move and finally covered his head where the bald place was with his hands and "ran fast through the line with flails falling on his back and shoulders until he fell and those at the end of the line picked him up and swung him over the cliff."[37] Don Ricardo, who came next, angered the crowd with insults so that they "clubbed him to death very quickly" and "where before they were performing a duty with no great taste for it, now they were angry, and the difference was apparent."[38] They began calling for a priest to kill. The crowd became insane with cruelty because of the insults and their drunkenness. The next man, Don Guillermo, wept "but not from fear" as the men mercilessly beat him, "and one drunkard jumped on top of him, astride his shoulders, and beat him with a bottle."[39] At the time of the killing of the guards Pilar had thought,

> It was a thing of great ugliness, but I had thought if this is how it must be, this is how it must be, and at least there was no cruelty, only the depriving of life which, as we all have learned in these years, is a thing of ugliness but also a necessity to do if we are to win, and to preserve the Republic.[40]

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[36] Ibid., p. 108.

[37] Ibid., p. 110.

[38] Ibid., p. 111.

[39] Ibid., p. 118.

But after the beating of Don Guillermo, she felt only shame and distaste. "If it is necessary to kill them all, and I am not convinced of that necessity, let them be killed decently and without mockery."[41] But even as she thought, the "lines" had become a drunken mob. When Don Anastasio Rivas, the fattest man in town, started toward the lines, the lines broke and ran for him. He threw himself down, his hands over his head, and then disappeared from sight as the men piled on top of him.[42] Next the mob stormed the building where the prisoners were being held. At least one part of Pilar's description of what went on inside is unforgettable:

> And I saw the priest with his skirts tucked up scrambling over a bench and those after him were chopping at him with the sickles and the reaping hooks and then some one had hold of his robe and there was another scream and another scream and I saw two men chopping into his back with sickles while a third man held the skirt of his robe and the priest's arms were up and he was clinging to the back of a chair . . . .[43]

If the novel ended at that point, one's disillusionment with mankind would be so great that he couldn't care less "for whom the bell tolls." But mankind is not that uncomplicated, and neither is Hemingway's novel. Pitted against the cold brutality of the scene above are scenes of warm compassion such as that of the old man on watch at the road, regretting that anyone must die in the war and

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p. 119.

[42] Ibid., p. 121.

[43] Ibid., p. 125.

feeling a bond between himself and his "brother" who is fighting on the opposite side.

> Across the road at the sawmill smoke was coming out of the chimney and Anselmo could smell it blown toward him through the snow. The fascists are warm, he thought, and they are comfortable, and tomorrow night we will kill them. It is a strange thing and I do not like to think of it. I have watched them all day and they are the same men that we are. I believe that I could walk up to the mill and knock on the door and I would be welcome except that they have orders to challenge all travellers and ask to see their papers. It is only orders that come between us. Those men are not fascists. I call them so, but they are not. They are poor men as we are. They should never be fighting against us and I do not like to think of the killing.[44]

And to completely confuse one's emotions about the worth of mankind, there are scenes like this one which pictures "the enemy":

> No one was alive on the hilltop except the boy Joaquin, who was under the dead body of Ignacio. Joaquin was bleeding from the nose and from the ears. He had known nothing and had no feeling since he had suddenly been in the very heart of the thunder and the breath had been wrenched from his body when the one bomb struck so close and Lieutenant Berrendo made the sign of the cross and then shot him in the back of the head, as quickly and as gently, if such an abrupt movement can be gentle, as Sordo had shot the wounded horse.[45]

Then, after giving the necessary but unpleasant orders, Lieutenant Berrendo "walked down to where the lieutenant lay who had been killed in the first assault." "What a bad thing war is," he thought to himself. He made the sign of the cross again, and as he walked down the hill, he prayed that the soul of his dead comrade might have peace. "He did not wish to stay to see his orders being

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[44] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

[45] Ibid., p. 322.

carried out."[46]

Man's loyalties are often divided. Clearly there are times when the brotherhood of man must be sacrificed for a cause greater than humanity, and there must be killing. Even then, man's conscience cries out against such brutality, but he deems it necessary "for the good of the Republic." For a few people in the book (e.g. Anselmo, Pilar, Lieutenant Berrendo) the death of any man, even one's enemy, is a tragedy. If there must be killing, as Pilar says, let it be done with honor and dignity, with compassion, and with deep regret. For life is sacred. One man cannot kill another, even for a cause, without bringing "death" to himself. Once a person has accepted "citizenship" in the human race (as Hemingway has done in writing this book), he need "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."[47]

The tour of Hemingway's Spanish gallery concludes with a bit of "art" that stimulates the olfactory senses as well as the eye. Hemingway has described what death looks like and feels like. Now with the help of the gypsy woman, Pilar, he finally has recaptured the smell of death that he could not recall from his experiences in World War I. Pilar is telling Robert Jordan that she had been able to smell death on the soldier who had come before

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[46] Ibid.

[47] From John Donne's "Meditation XVII," which inspired the title of Hemingway's novel.

Jordan to help the guerillas blow up a train. Later he had been wounded in another attack and Jordan had had to shoot him.

> I saw the death of that one with the rare name [Kashkin] in his face as though it were burned there with a branding iron. . . . I saw death there as plainly as though it were sitting on his shoulder. And what is more he smelt of death.[48]

Naturally Pilar is encouraged to give more detail about the odor of death. Here, in part, is her description:

> "Put your nose against the brass handle of a screwed-tight porthole on a rolling ship that is swaying under you so that you are faint and hollow in the stomach and you have a part of that smell. . . . go down the hill in Madrid early in the morning to the matadero . . . and wait for the old women who go before daylight to drink the blood of the beasts that are slaughtered. When such an old woman comes out of the matadero, holding her shawl around her, with her face gray and her eyes hollow, and the whiskers of age on her chin, and on her cheeks, . . . not bristles, but pale sprouts in the death of her face; put your arms around her, Ingles, and hold her to you and kiss her on the mouth and you will know the second part that odor is made of. . . . walk back up into the city and when thou seest a refuse pail with dead flowers in it plunge thy nose deep into it and inhale as that scent mixes with those thou hast already in thy nasal passages. . . . Then . . . it is important that the day be in autumn with rain, . . . thou shouldst continue to walk through the city . . . smelling what thou wilt smell where they are sweeping out the casas de putas and emptying the slop jars into the drains and, with this odor . . . only faintly reaching thy nostrils, thou shouldst go on to the Jardin Botanico where . . . thou wilt find an abandoned gunny sack with the odor of the wet earth, the dead flowers, and the doings of that night. In this sack will be contained the essence of it all, both the dead earth and the dead stalks of the flowers and their rotted blooms and the smell that is both the death and birth of man. . . . Thou wilt wrap this sack around thy head and try to breathe and then, if thou hast not lost any of the previous odors, when thou inhalest deeply, thou wilt smell the odor of the death-to-come as we know it."
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> "All right," Robert Jordan said, "And you say Kashkin smelt like that when he was here?"

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[48] For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 251.

"Yes."

"Well," said Robert Jordan gravely. "If that is true it is a good thing that I shot him."[49]

III. SCENES OF DEATH IN AFRICA

Hemingway's continued courtship of danger and death takes him next to the land of the lion, the kudu, the leopard--a primeval land far removed from the corruption of civilization and war. The African savannas represent a primitive, uncomplicated way of life: life means survival, and that is what life there is all about. The drama of death is portrayed again, this time the main characters being the hunter and the hunted and, of course, death. It is here that Hemingway takes to himself the art of killing--of administering the "gift of death," as he had so often seen done in the bull rings in Spain on a sunny afternoon. The cape and sword have been exchanged for a gun; the matador is now a hunter; but the effect is essentially the same. In Africa as in Spain the true measure of an animal or a man is his ability to die well.

Death Among the Green Hills

Hemingway's record of his first African adventures, Green Hills of Africa, contains one description after another of the deaths of various animals. There are many scenes of bravery in the book (of both man and beast), but undoubtedly the most famous

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[49] Ibid., pp. 254-256.

passage describes the death of a hyena, that contemptible, cowardly scavenger of the jungle.

> It was funny . . . to see a hyena shot at close range. There was that comic slap of the bullet and the hyena's agitated surprise to find death inside of him. It was funnier to see a hyena shot at a great distance, . . . to see him go over backwards, to see him start that frantic circle, . . . racing the little nickelled death inside him. But the great joke of all, . . . was the classic hyena . . . that would circle madly, snapping and tearing at himself until he pulled his own intestines out, and then stood there, jerking them out and eating them with relish.[50]

From "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" comes this remarkable description of the death of a lion. Doubtless, few people are aware of what goes through the mind of an animal facing death. Hemingway's unusual "stream of consciousness" portrait gives that insight, and for that reason it has more depth than a visual picture alone could have. Here again is the artist at his best:

> Then watching the object, not afraid, but hesitating before going down the bank to drink with such a thing opposite him, he saw a man figure detach itself from it and he turned his heavy head and swung away toward the cover of the trees as he heard a cracking crash and felt the slam of a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet that bit his flank and ripped in sudden hot scalding nausea through his stomach. . . . Then it crashed again and he felt the blow as it hit his lower ribs and ripped on through, blood sudden hot and frothy in his mouth, and he galloped toward the high grass where he could crouch and not be seen and make them bring the crashing thing close enough so that he could make a rush and get the man that held it.[51]
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> . . . . . .
>
> Thirty-five yards into the grass the big lion lay flattened out along the ground. His ears were back and his only movement was a slight twitching up and down of his long, black-tufted

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[50]Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp. 37-38.

> tail. He had turned at bay as soon as he had reached this cover and he was sick with the wound through his full belly, and weakening with the wound through his lungs that brought a thin foamy red to his mouth each time he breathed. His flanks were wet and hot and flies were on the little openings the solid bullets had made in his tawny hide, and his big yellow eyes, narrowed with hate, looked straight ahead, only blinking when the pain came as he breathed, and his claws dug in the soft baked earth. All of him, pain, sickness, hatred and all of his remaining strength, was tightening into an absolute concentration for a rush. He could hear the men talking and he waited, gathering all of himself into this preparation for a charge as soon as the men would come into the grass. As he heard their voices his tail stiffened to twitch up and down, and, as they came into the edge of the grass, he made a coughing grunt and charged.[52]

The lion is the epitome of a Hemingway code hero (to be discussed in a later chapter): he is unafraid but cautious; he has the wound which embitters him against the world; he suffers much pain without sound; he carefully plans his next move; he does not run from death, but meets it head-on and still without fear; he dies fighting for life. The lion and the code hero (Wilson in this story) are counterparts, and Hemingway respects them both. One is also reminded of the description of a brave bull in a previous section of this chapter. The lion, the bull, the matador, the hunter--all are brave and all are prepared to die well.

Death in the Shadow of Kilimanjaro

> Kilimanjaro is a snow covered mountain 19,710 feet high and is said to be the highest mountain in Africa. Its western summit is called the Masai "Ngàje Ngài," the House of God.

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[51] "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," p. 15.

[52] Ibid., p. 19.

> Close to the western summit there is the dried and frozen carcass of a leopard. No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude.[53]

"The Snows of Kilimanjaro" contains Hemingway's most intimate view of death. The signs of death are ominously present--the birds, the hyenas, the odor--as Hemingway explores the sensations of dying. The "specimen" for observation is Harry Street, who faces sure death from a gangrene infection. In this story Hemingway even goes so far as to take the reader "across the border," to explore man's feelings at that very moment when death conquers the body and the soul takes flight toward the "House of God"--strange destination for one whose life has been lived as Harry's has, just as it was a strange destination for the leopard.

How does it feel to die? "The marvelous thing is that it's painless. That's how you know when it starts."

> So now it was all over, he thought . . . he had no pain and with the pain the horror had gone and all he felt now was a great tiredness and anger that this was the end of it. For this, that now was coming, he had very little curiosity. For years it had obsessed him; but now it meant nothing in itself.[54]

"It was strange how easy being tired enough made it."

> . . . Aye he was tired. Too tired. He was going to sleep a little while. He lay still and death was not there. It must have gone around another street. It went in pairs, on bicycles, and moved absolutely silently on the pavements.[55]

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[53] "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," p. 52.

[54] Ibid., p. 54.

[55] Ibid., p. 71.

"And just then it occurred to him that he was going to die." It came as a sudden, unexpected, reluctant realization at a moment when he was comfortable, dwelling on how good life was. "It came with a rush; not as a rush of water nor of wind; but of a sudden evil-smelling emptiness and the odd thing was that the hyena slipped along the edge of it."[56]

> He felt death come again. This time there was no rush. It was a puff, as of a wind that makes a candle flicker and the flame go tall. . . . So this was how you died, in whispers that you did not hear. Well, there would be no more quarrelling. The one experience that he had never had he was not going to spoil now.[57]

"I'm getting as bored with dying as with everything else, he thought."[58]

> "Do you feel anything strange?" he asked her. . . . He had felt death come by again. . . . just then, death had come and rested its head on the foot of the cot and he could smell its breath. . . . Never believe any of that about a scythe and a skull, he told her. It can be two bicycle policemen as easily, or be a bird. Or it can have a wide snout like a hyena. . . . It had moved up on him now, but it had no shape any more. It simply occupied space. . . . It did not go away but moved a little closer. . . . It moved up closer to him still and now he could not speak to it, and when it saw he could not speak it came a little closer, and now he tried to send it away without speaking, but it moved in on him so its weight was all upon his chest, and while it crouched there and he could not move, or speak, he heard the woman say, "Bwana is asleep now. Take the cot up very gently and carry it into the tent."[59]

What is death like? It is a private affair: no one else could see,

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[56] Ibid., p. 64.

[57] Ibid., p. 67.

[58] Ibid., p. 73.

[59] Ibid., p. 74.

feel, or otherwise share in what he was going through.

> He could not speak to tell her to make it go away and it crouched now, heavier, so he could not breathe. And then, while they lifted the cot, suddenly it was all right and the weight went from his chest.[57]

And at that moment Harry was dead. Now we go with Harry Street to the very edge of death itself.

Death is a "plane ride" (the sensation of flying). Each one must go alone. ("I won't be able to take the Memsahib. There's only room for one.") It is a familiar thing (as "the old familiar roar" of the engines). It is casual conversation (about the tea before take-off), and it is waving good-by (to Helen and the boys standing below). It is unalarming (a smooth rise over familiar ground)--and then an unexpected change in destination. There is darkness; a storm rages, the rain thick like flying through a waterfall. Then the storm clears and "there, ahead, all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro." Death came to Harry Street disguised as a lovely dream of escape--escape from failure, escape from frustration, escape from a dominating wife--until he was confronted with the "unbelievable whiteness" of death itself. "And then he knew that there was where he was going."[58] There is no escape from death, Harry.

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[57] Ibid., p. 75.

[58] Ibid., pp. 75-76.

Meanwhile, for those left behind, death is "the strange, human, almost crying sound" of the hyena; it is waking up afraid; the nauseating shock of seeing an undressed gangrened limb; and the rising fear and the reluctant realization that Harry won't be answering her calls; it is the frantic, loud beating of her heart that drowns out even the noise of the hyena.[59]

IV. SCENES OF DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN

The scene shifts again as Hemingway follows danger to the blue waters of the Caribbean. Even there death lurked--there was death in every line and danger in every giant of the deep caught on that line. The struggle to live could be viewed at close range. For the African lion, there is no struggle; death is swift and clean. The marlin, on the other hand, fights death, resists it to the very last. The fish is brave; he resists the inevitable, even though the outcome is certain--if the line holds. Then the scavengers of death come in the Gulf as they had in the savannas; the sharks rather than the hyenas.

One of the highlights of The Old Man and the Sea is the description of the death of the giant marlin, most beautiful and most to be prized of the ocean catch. After a long struggle, the old man is finally able to harpoon his opponent.

> Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width

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[59] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

> and all his power and his beauty. He seemed to hang in the air above the old man in the skiff. Then he fell into the water with a crash that sent spray over the old man and over all the skiff.
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> . . . the fish was on his back with his silver belly up. The shaft of the harpoon was projecting at an angle from the fish's shoulder and the sea was discoloring with the red of the blood from his heart. First it was dark as a shoal in the blue water that was more than a mile deep. Then it spread like a cloud. The fish was silvery and still and floated with the waves.[60]

Then the old man is faced with another opponent. The fish he considered to be his brother; the shark was his arch enemy. The biggest shark the old man had ever seen mutilated the marlin, taking about forty pounds. The old man harpooned the shark with expert aim--right at the location of the brain.

> The shark swung over and the old man saw his eye was not alive and then he swung over once again, wrapping himself in two loops of the rope. The old man knew that he was dead but the shark would not accept it. Then, on his back with his tail lashing and his jaws clicking, the shark plowed over the water as a speed-boat does. The water was white where his tail beat it and three-quarters of his body was clear above the water when the rope came taut, shivered, and then snapped. The shark lay quietly for a little while on the surface and the old man watched him. Then he went down very slowly.[61]

The marlin had struggled to resist death until the very end; the shark would not accept defeat even then, but "lived" on long enough to at least free himself from the ropes so that he was no longer a prisoner. These inhabitants of the deep have valuable lessons to teach a man about dying: struggle to live, resist death,

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[60]Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), pp. 93-94.

[61]Ibid., p. 102.

don't give in to "fate." And when death is really inevitable, one need not accept defeat even then. Like the shark, "a man may be destroyed but not defeated." The shark was dead, but "something" kept him going long enough to set him free.

V. SCENES OF DEATH AT HOME

Hemingway did indeed find death wherever he went on both sides of the Atlantic. But some of the most unusual and disturbing sketches have the United States as their setting. As has been seen in previous sections of this chapter, death is often portrayed as the visible antagonist. In many stories, however, death is not seen, but lurks in the shadows, thereby becoming even more foreboding. The imminence of death, the fear of dying, the omnipresent shroud of death can be worse than death itself.

Nick Adams is exposed to that kind of atmosphere in "The Battler."[62] Having been thrown off a train, Nick finds himself near the swamp. Seeing a firelight, he comes upon a camp, where he meets a crazed ex-prizefighter and his large but extremely friendly, polite, and gentle Negro companion, Bugs. The "ex-champ," a hideous sight with his misshapen face and his one remaining cauliflower ear, becomes agitated when Nick refuses to let him see his knife;

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[62]Nick Adams, who represents Hemingway growing up, is reminiscent of young George Willard in Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio--a young man who is exposed to the grotesque side of life before he is emotionally equipped to cope with the things he sees.

but Bugs stops him with a blackjack. Then, after explaining the fighter's condition, Bugs urges Nick to leave. This artfully constructed story begins with the firelight, which draws Nick toward it with warm friendliness, and closes with the firelight, which Nick sees again after he departs--now an ominous, sad, frightening thing.[63]

Death lurks ominously in the shadows of the swamp in the next picture as Nick fishes for trout in the calm waters of a Michigan stream. Again he is aware of the swamp and the dangers that lie beyond the bounds of safety if one goes out too far. Nick has been near the swamp before (the previous story), and he has just returned home after having been nearly killed in the war. Thus, he plays it safe and according to the rules in the "Big Two-Hearted River" stories, as he tries to regain his sanity and emotional equilibrium. He is not about to tempt fate or challenge death just yet by getting too near the swamp.[64]

In "A Day's Wait" the principal character is Schatz, a very miserable nine-year-old boy who is in bed with a headache and a high fever--102 degrees, he heard the doctor say. All day he lies white and tense, staring at the foot of the bed, waiting to die, because he had been told by some boys at school in France that a person cannot live with a temperature of 44 degrees. The tension

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[63] "The Battler," pp. 129-138.

[64] "Big Two-Hearted River," pp. 209-232.

finally relaxes when his father explains the difference between centigrade and Fahrenheit thermometers, but the next day the boy would cry at little things that were of no importance.[66]

No one wants to die. Even when death is inevitable, one likes to see a man resist, to struggle, to fight (like the marlin) until the very end. One rather admires the courage of a child waiting to die--so young, trying to be brave, trying to accept the inevitable. But a man just waiting to die is a pitiable sight--enough so to make a person sick, as Nick Adams finds out in "The Killers." One of the most disparaging portraits in Hemingway's gallery of death is that of Ole Andreson in his cheap hotel room, hunched on his cot, face to the wall, resigned to his fate and waiting for the killers to come put him out of his misery. Death hangs heavy like a shroud over the scene so that Nick can hardly breathe. After seeing that, he feels he has to "get out of this town."[66]

And perhaps it is time to leave the museum to study other aspects of Hemingway's treatment of death, for there is the strong implication in these last scenes that there is more to death than the physical manifestations. There is the definite feeling in "The Killers" that Ole Andreson, though still breathing, is "dead" already; he stopped living the moment he started waiting for death

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[65]"A Day's Wait," pp. 436-439.

[66]"The Killers," pp. 287-289.

to come. Is there, then, a kind of death other than the physical aspect when the body ceases to function? Is it possible for men and women to become living corpses, to merely exist in a kind of living death in which life is robbed of meaning and physical death would indeed be a welcomed end?

CHAPTER V

ANOTHER KIND OF DEATH

Ole Andreson with all his clothes on lies on the bed, face to the wall--waiting; Pablo takes the detonators and steals away in the night with his horses--hoping to escape death at the bridge; Lady Brett Ashley, tall, lovely goddess, whirls impulsively from one romance to another--trying to substitute them for the love she wants but cannot have; a father lifts a Civil War pistol to his head--taking what seems to be the only way out; Mr. and Mrs. Elliot have taken separate rooms; an American couple are going to Paris--to establish separate residences; for Joe Butler there is nothing left--having lost both his "old man" and his illusions about him all in one day; cold and miserable, Liz Coates walks alone in the mist back to the house--she had wanted love, but now "everything felt gone"; stepping out into the rain, Lt. Henry walks away from the scene of death in the hospital--he had tried to say good-by, but it was no good: there was nothing there any more.

Hemingway's world is filled with emotional cripples, men and women like the ones pictured above for whom life has lost all meaning. They share one thing in common: all have suffered traumatic experiences that have left them unable to cope with reality. Life has betrayed them and they feel they have nothing left to live for. "Has been" bullfighters, ex-champion boxers, expatriate soldiers, married couples on the brink of divorce, cowards who live in

constant fear of death, the disappointed in love, the disillusioned in war--Hemingway's world is one of "people who have come to the end of the line, who no longer know what to do or where to turn."[1] They represent a world of people who frequent bars and "clean, well-lighted cafés," who try to drink away their problems or sleep away their problems or lose their problems in meaningless love affairs or end their problems by committing suicide. They are people who are always experiencing "the end of something," but for whom there is "no end and no beginning," whose motto is "Give us a prescription, Doctor." They represent a world of people who can't sleep, who can't love, who can't pray, who feel that they "have got to get to somewhere" but ironically have no place to go. Theirs is a fatalistic and nihilistic world of emptiness, futility, loneliness, frustration, despair. Life for them is empty--a void, a meaningless cycle of routine. Though some of them are still struggling, many, like Ole Andreson and Billy Campbell, have given up. In fact, suicide sounds like a rather sensible solution: they might as well be dead because they are in reality "dead" already. Life is merely existence from one unbearable moment to the next.

These are the people Gertrude Stein called the "lost generation," and Hemingway wrote of them with more understanding than any other American fictionist. He chose not to refer to them as "lost" (particularly the principals in The Sun Also Rises), though many of

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[1]Irving Howe, "Hemingway: The Conquest of Panic," New Republic (July 24, 1961), pp. 19-20.

them do appear to be just that. He painted vivid portraits of a generation knocked to its knees, hit below the belt with a disillusionment it was not prepared to cope with.

> His world of men and women . . . is completely empty of will. His puppets are . . . leaves very violently blown hither and thither; drugged or at least deeply intoxicated phantoms of a sort of matter-of-fact shell-shock.[2]

"The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" (formerly titled "Give Us a Prescription, Doctor") presents a picture of the plight of this shell-shocked generation. They have become drug addicts, not literally--like Billy Campbell ("A Pursuit Race"), who tried to escape his problems by numbing himself to them with dope--but the same in principle. They reach out for concrete things or actions through which to grasp some meaning in life; some seek an escape from life; all are reaching out for something to believe in and hold on to. Theirs is a sick world, and they are a sick people. They need a prescription, but unfortunately there is no opium that will cure disillusionment. Still they must have something--if not a cure, at least something to ease the pain, to erase the need to think, to make life bearable. What opiums do they seek? Mr. Frazer, a hospital patient in the story, lists a few: religion, music, economics, patriotism (in Italy and Germany), sex, drinking, gambling, the radio (his own favorite escape), any new form of government, education. But "the real, the actual opium of the people" Mr. Frazer

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[2]Wyndham Lewis, "The Dumb Ox: A Study of Ernest Hemingway," The American Review (June, 1934), p. 294.

had to call forth from "a little way around the corner in that well-lighted part of his mind that was there after two or more drinks in the evening . . . ."[3] Bread. That is it. Bread is the opium of the people. But not even Mr. Frazer can understand why. (It really is not too difficult to understand; subconsciously, Mr. Frazer knows. What these people are really trying to escape is death--in one form or another. And "the staff of life" is the logical weapon to stave off that enemy.)

There is, then, another kind of death that Hemingway portrays in many of his stories and novels. He deals not only with physical death but also with spiritual or psychological death that comes with loss of faith in people, in self, or in ideals--the thousand little deaths we die from day to day: cowardice, frustration, hatred, guilt, disappointment, disillusionment.[4] When a person faces these moments, something dies within him, leaving him feeling empty, hollow; something is gone that cannot really be replaced.

Doubtless the population of this disillusioned world was comparatively small; Hemingway's is a narrow world. But these people do represent a side of life that did--and does--exist. And all people to a greater or lesser degree are a part of that world

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[3]"The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 486. All page references to short stories in this chapter are from this source.

[4]Maxwell Geismar, "No Man Alone Now," Virginia Quarterly Review (October, 1941), p. 522.

at some time in their lives; for at one time or another everyone comes to know fear, guilt, disillusionment.

I. THE DEATH OF A GENERATION

Paco was a young waiter in Madrid. He loved Madrid and he loved his work in the café with the bright lights and clean linen. In fact, he loved everything about life. Paco's head was full of romantic ideas and wonderful dreams: "to be a good Catholic, a revolutionary, and have a steady job like this, while, at the same time being a bullfighter."[5] Especially, Paco wanted to be a bullfighter. Sometimes, after everyone else had left the café, he pretended that he was a matador; and using a napkin muleta, he made perfect passes at the imaginary bull.

Enrique, the kitchen boy, three years older than Paco and very cynical and bitter, scoffed at Paco's game. He, too, could be a torero--the imaginary kind. But in the ring it was different--because of fear. Paco's courage would fail him if he faced a real bull in the ring. But Paco was self-confident. "He had done it too many times in his imagination." He had visualized

> the horns . . . the bull's wet muzzle, the ear twitching, then the head go down and the charge, the hoofs thudding and the hot bull pass him as he swung the cape . . . again, then again, and again, and again, to end winding the bull around him in his great media-veronica, and walk swingingly away, with bull hairs caught in the gold ornaments of his jacket from the close passes; the bull standing hypnotized and the crowd applauding.

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[5]"The Capital of the World," pp. 42-43.

> No, he would not be afraid. . . . Even if he ever was afraid . . . he could do it anyway. He had confidence.[6]

But one thing was missing from Paco's dream of the fight: he did not understand the presence of death. Paco had never had an experience with death; his world was still full of wonderful illusions of courage and immortality and success. But Enrique knew. He had been to the amateur fights only, but that was enough to make him wise about the matter of death in the horns. He tried to make it real for Paco by tying two meat knives to the legs of a chair: "You think of the bull but you do not think of the horns. The bull has such force that the horns rip like a knife . . . and they kill . . . ." If Paco could make those passes with Enrique holding the chair before him and playing the bull, then they would mean something. To Enrique's unhappy surprise, Paco agreed to the experiment.

Holding the chair before him, Enrique charged; and in Paco's imagination he was the bull. As the knife blade passed him,

> it was, to him, the real horn, white-tipped, black, smooth, and as Enrique passed him and turned to rush again it was the hot, blood-flanked mass of the bull that thudded by, then turned like a cat and came again as he swung the cape slowly. Then the bull turned and came again and, as he watched the onrushing point, he stepped his left foot two inches too far forward and the knife did not pass, but had slipped in as easily as into a wineskin and there was a hot scalding rush above and around the sudden inner rigidity of steel and Enrique shouting. . . . And Paco slipped forward on the chair, the apron cape still held, Enrique pulling on the chair as the knife turned in him, in him, Paco.[7]

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[6] Ibid., p. 47.

[7] Ibid., p. 49.

The knife was out, and Paco sat on the floor in "the widening warm pool." Enrique ran for a doctor.

> Paco was alone, first sitting up, then huddled over, then slumped on the floor, until it was over, feeling his life go out of him as dirty water empties from a bathtub when the plug is drawn. He was frightened and he felt faint and he tried to say an act of contrition . . . he felt too faint and he was lying face down on the floor and it was over very quickly.[8]

The boy Paco had never known about the sadness of the world--the despair of its people.

> He had no idea how they really lived nor how they ended. He did not even realize they ended. He died . . . full of illusions. He had no had time in his life to lose any of them, nor even, at the end, to complete an act of contrition.[9]

Death seems especially sad when it comes to the young, but would the people in Hemingway's world think so? Hemingway himself once said, "It is better to die young, to go out in a blaze of light, rather than wait till your body is worn out and old and your illusions shattered." The first sentence is the most significant one in the story: "Madrid is full of boys named Paco." So is the world. And all the Paco's of the world must learn some time of the reality of death; everyone must some time come to grips with reality. The dream world of the young cannot last forever, unless one dies young while the dream is all he knows. Perhaps in that sense, Hemingway is saying, the Paco in this story was lucky.

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[8] Ibid., p. 50.

[9] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

The Death of Illusions

> In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die.[10]

Hemingway tells us in his early Nick Adams stories that everyone "dies" a little as he grows up. (In fact, a man begins to die from the moment he is born.) Everyone, like Paco, has romantic illusions of one kind or another as a child: illusions of immortality, illusions of romance, illusions of daring courage and strength--our own and that of our parents (the "my dad can lick your dad" kind of thing). Most people live sheltered lives as children and are therefore totally unprepared for the harshness and wickedness of the "outside" world. Like Nick Adams, the men and women who were to become the lost generation had some unpleasant experiences while growing up, grew a little scar tissue; but nothing quite prepared them for the horrible experience that rocked the world in 1918--World War I.

No one was prepared for the horrors of global warfare. The soldier went marching off to "make the world safe for democracy," to fight for "mother, home, and sweetheart," to do his patriotic duty and bring honor to flag and country. He was in no way prepared for seeing his pals "spattered all over" him or for hearing the screams of the mangled bodies that once were men. Then he himself was caught in death's clutches and felt "life slip away like a

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[10]"Indian Camp," p. 95.

handkerchief being pulled out of a pocket by the corner" then slip back in again, leaving him alive in a shell-riddled body that would never again be the same. Or perhaps it was the shock of his own cowardice that was more than he could take; because now that death's reality was known, he was suddenly afraid to die. He was afraid to sleep for fear that death would come in the night, afraid to sleep because of the dreadful nightmares, unable to sleep because of the pain. He was afraid to get well because he would be sent back to the front lines again, and the next time he might not escape. The young hero soon learned that war is not all glory, honor, patriotism (except possibly in the officers' headquarters or in the hometown newspapers). He found that "there was no glory in a gutted body, no dignity in a shell-shocked soldier." On the battlefront there was nothing "great, holy or honorable about war." It was a "blood bath, an inferno, an agonized cry in the darkness. No mercy. Nothing."[11] War was sickening. War was death--sometimes the dead being the lucky ones. Amidst bombing, shell explosions, and so much wounding and dying, it was not easy to remember the patriotic slogans. It was hard to be self-sacrificing when staring death in the face.

The Death of Ideals (Patriotism)

Seeing so much of death and sickness and pain and blood and mutilation--this is what hit the war generation. And the ones

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[11]Kurt Singer, Hemingway: Life and Death of a Giant (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1961), p. 113.

hardest hit were the soldiers, the ambulance drivers, the nurses near the front lines who saw the worst and suffered the most. Many of the soldiers were like Nick Adams, who, though exposed to violence and shocking things while growing up in Michigan, was totally unprepared for the possibility of dying. He had come to Italy to fight for his country, but he had not counted on dying; that was a high price to pay for patriotism. Now severely injured, Nick turned to his companion (also wounded): "You and me we've made a separate peace. Not patriots."[12]

The above scene is re-enforced in A Farewell to Arms, Hemingway's great novel about the war and its effects on the people of that generation. Lt. Frederic Henry, like Nick Adams, had been severely wounded--physically and psychically; he had seen death and did not desire another close call. When, after months of recuperation in various hospitals, he was returned to battle, he took with him (as will be recalled from the previous chapter) a newly acquired wisdom about war: "the thing to do was stay calm and not get shot." When last seen, he was thinking about that philosophy on the way to Pordenone. Before reaching there, however, he was to be further initiated into the ranks of the disillusioned. The Italians had begun shooting officers in their own army who had become separated from their companies, thinking that they might be Germans in disguise; and before he ever reached Pordenone, Lt. Henry was thus singled out

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[12]"Chapter VI" from In Our Time, p. 136.

for execution because of his accent. This was the final straw which caused him to make his "separate peace." He managed to slip into the river and swim to safety; he deserted the army to save his life. Patiotism? It drowned in the river. When Lt. Henry emerged on the other side, he was a different man. He had been baptized in the disillusionment of the war, and he wanted no more of the "gory glory" he had been exposed to on the battlefield and at the bridge. Furthermore, he was then able to rationalize his action so that he need not feel guilt for what he had done:

> You were out of it now. You had no more obligation. If they shot floorwalkers after a fire in the department store because they spoke with an accent they had always had, then certainly the floorwalkers would not be expected to return when the store opened again for business.[13]

A little later he makes his decision final: "I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace."[14] He then escapes to Switzerland (a neutral country) with the nurse he had fallen in love with; but there Catherine Barkley dies in childbirth. Henry is left at the end with nothing.

Lt. Frederic Henry stands for many men. Philip Young says of him in reviewing A Farwell to Arms:

> . . . he stands for the experience of his country: in his evolution from complicity in the war to bitterness to escape, the whole of America could read its recent history in a crucial period, Wilson to Harding. When he expressed his disillusionment with the ideals the war claimed to promote, and jumped

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[13]Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 232.

[14]Ibid., p. 243.

into a river and deserted, Henry's action epitomized the contemporary feeling of a whole nation.[15]

An article in Time magazine noted that "the first thing the Lost Generation lost was its faith in words, big words."[16] Lt. Henry voices this disillusionment in A Farewell to Arms:

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. . . . I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury.[17]

But the disillusionment went deeper than that of losing faith in words.

The Death of Ideals (Morality)

Catherine Barkley had suffered disillusionments of her own during the war. Her fiancé of eight years had been killed in the war. She had joined the nurses' corps when he joined the army.

> I remember [she explains to Lt. Henry] having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a sabre cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head. Or shot through the shoulder. Something picturesque. . . . He didn't have a sabre cut. They blew him all to bits.[18]

She had saved her love for him; then he was killed, "and that was

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[15]Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (No. 1 of Pamphlets on American Writers Series, eds. William Van O'Connor, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 13.

[16]"The Hero of the Code," Time (July 14, 1961), p. 87.

[17]A Farewell to Arms, pp. 184-185.

[18]Ibid., p. 20.

the end of it." It was also the end of Catherine's faith in religion or morality.[19] Love had betrayed her; morality had left her empty. She had learned that in time of war if one is to survive there can be no planning for a tomorrow that may never come. One must snatch what bit of love or life that may come one's way without thought of moral consequences. The regular rules of life just did not work in war time. Thus, when she falls in love with Henry, she does not stand upon morality or ceremonies, but loves him freely, openly, without reservation:

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[19]When we speak of "morality" here, we refer to the death of morality as measured by conventional standards--in this case, the Victorian code of ethics that largely governed social behavior before the war. Victorian morality betrayed the war generation (or so they thought); it had caused them to get hurt. Catherine nursed her romantic illusions of love, the "hearts and flowers" type of romance. She "saved" her love for her "knight in shining armor," who was supposed to come to her at the hospital with a "sabre wound in the shoulder," her hero. Victorian morality was "blown to bits" along with her fiancé and her illusions. Catherine then abandoned morality altogether, as Helen Ferguson points out and Catherine herself confirms by her words and her actions. But--CATHERINE DIES! And her death is a message to Lt. Henry and to the others of the "lost generation": one cannot break the laws of life and survive.

Man is a moral animal. Life seems to demand some kind of moral behavior from its inhabitants. Furthermore, we are inspired to moral behavior by the threats of terrible consequences if we step out of line: "the bogy man will get you," "the goblins will get you," "the devil will get you"--or in Hemingway's world "death will get you," if you don't watch out. In story after story Hemingway's characters warn of the dangers of "going out too far," of going beyond "the bounds of safety"; they stress the importance of playing the game strictly by the rules. But by WHAT RULES? The rules they knew had been wiped out by the war. By what new rules does one live in a world that must co-exist with war? This was a part of the sense of frustration experienced by the "lost generation" as they went searching for a new code to live by.

> There's no way to be married except by church or state. We are married privately. You see, darling, it would mean everything to me if I had any religion. But I haven't any religion. . . . You're my religion. You're all I've got.[20]

Helen Ferguson denounces Catherine for her illicit affair with Henry: "You're two of the same thing. I'm ashamed of you, Catherine Barkley. You have no shame and no honor . . . ."[21] But Catherine maintains her philosophy that " . . . life isn't hard to manage when you've nothing to lose."[22] She accepts her fate of pregnancy as one of life's tricks and promises not to make too much of a fuss about it.

But the war had shown Catherine the face of death, and she was afraid of it. She expressed her fears to Lt. Henry:

> And you'll always love me, won't you? . . . And the rain won't make any difference? . . . That's good. Because . . . I've always been afraid of the rain. . . . I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it. . . . And sometimes I see you dead in it.[23]

Death came for Catherine Barkley in the rain. But when it came, she accepted it like a "trooper" and tried not to make too much of a fuss. She kept insisting that she was not afraid but just hated it. "I don't want to die and leave you," she said to Henry, "but I get so tired of it and I feel I'm going to die. . . . I'm not

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[20] A Farewell to Arms, pp. 115-116.

[21] Ibid., p. 247.

[22] Ibid., p. 137.

[23] Ibid., pp. 125-126.

afraid. I just hate it." "I'm not a bit afraid. It's just a dirty trick."[24]

The disillusionment was destined to go still deeper; those who made their separate peace with patriotism and morality came to feel a betrayal of life itself.[25] Living through war made it seem that life and death were in a partnership to get man--both were antagonists pitted against man. To live was not much better than to die, because sooner or later life would play "a dirty trick" and you would die anyway.

> Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. . . . they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you.[26]

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[24] Ibid., pp. 330-331.

[25] Carlos Baker has an excellent commentary on this point in his review of A Farewell to Arms: "A little later Frederic Henry bitterly compares the human predicament first to a game and then to a swarm of ants on a log in a campfire. . . . Living now seems to be a war-like game, played 'for keeps,' where to be tagged out is to die. Here again there is the moral implication in the idea of being caught off base--trying to steal third, say, when the infield situation and the number of outs make it wiser to stay on second. 'They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you.' One trouble, of course, is that the player rarely had time enough to learn by long experience; his fatal error may come in the second half of the first inning, which is about as far as Catherine seems likely to go. Even those who survive long enough to learn the rules may be killed through the operation of chance or the accidents of the game. Death may, in short, come 'gratuitously' without the 'slightest reference to the rules.'" (Hemingway: the Writer as Artist, p. 100.)

[26] A Farewell to Arms, p. 327.

The Death of Religion

This fatalistic picture was made more horrible by the fact that Lt. Henry and his world were losing faith in any kind of messiah to save them from this hopelessness:

> Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first toward the centre where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. But most of them went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell off into the fire. I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before I added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants.[27]

The scene is reminiscent of Mark Twain's pessimism about life and God in his dark story about "the mysterious stranger" who portrayed God as a devilish fiend that enjoyed torturing his creations. Fatalism prevailed in that story, too, in that the boys could do nothing to save the life of their friend although they knew the exact time he would die. But the most cruel blow of all was that he met his death by doing a good deed.

Like the boys in "The Mysterious Stranger," Lt. Henry is unable to do anything about Catherine's death. He leaves the hospital for a while and goes to a café to wait. While there he prays for God to spare Catherine's life:

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[27] Ibid., pp. 327-328.

> Everything was gone inside of me. I did not think. I could not think. I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. . . . God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. That was all right but don't let her die. Please, please, dear God, don't let her die.[28]

Catherine dies anyway. And in Henry's sight even God could not (or would not) save her.

One might conclude from this that Henry's loss of faith in religion was due to the fact that Catherine died despite his prayers; but in truth, Lt. Henry had lost faith in God at the time he was wounded, if not even before then. At the outset of the story, in the hospital where Henry was recuperating from his wound, a priest had tried seriously to discuss religion with Henry: ". . . in my country it is understood that a man may love God. It is not a dirty joke." The priest continues, ". . . you do not love God." "No," responds Henry. "You do not love Him at all?" "I am afraid of him in the night sometimes."[29] It seems significant that there is no capitalization denoting divinity in Lt. Henry's reference to "him.")

It is a childish game of religion that Henry and others of the lost generation play with God. They have no faith in Him; yet they fear to deny Him altogether. And in time of trouble they

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[28] Ibid., p. 330.

[29] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

pray in a kind of bargaining session: "Do, Lord, what I ask and then I'll do anything you want me to." Their prayers are usually selfish and insincere. Another soldier (the fact that he is unidentified implies that he represents many others) in a tight spot on the battlfield prayed that same kind of prayer:

> While the bombardment was knocking the trench to pieces at Fossalta, he lay very flat and sweated and prayed oh jesus christ get me out of here. Dear jesus please get me out. Christ please please please christ. If you'll only keep me from getting killed I'll do anything you say. I believe in you and I'll tell every one in the world that you are the only one that matters. Please please dear jesus. The shelling moved further up the line. We went to work on the trench and in the morning the sun came up and the day was hot and muggy and cheerful and quiet. The next night back at Mestre he did not tell the girl he went upstairs with at the Villa Rossa about Jesus. And he never told anybody.[30]

This prayer shows the same lack of faith. Again there is no capitalization to indicate divinity; and the lack of punctuation to set off the references to Jesus as a vocative would suggest that the words "jesus" and "christ" are used in vain, like interjections of feeling rather than conversation with God. There is the same bargaining spirit: do this for me and I'll do anything you say. But again the promises are not kept, showing all the more a lack of sincerity.

After the war they even stop "playing the game." The feeling of nihilism has permeated their religion to the extent that their prayers are frighteningly empty:

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[30]"Chapter VII" from In Our Time, p. 143.

> Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada.[31]

Nothing. The "Lord's Prayer" in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is quite similar to T. S. Eliot's "Lord's Prayer" in "The Hollow Men," a poem which captures so well the emotional climate surrounding the "lost generation": the people want to pray and try to pray, but their lack of faith comes between them and God so that they become utterly frustrated in their efforts.

The Death of Love

> When Catherine dies the collapse of all reality is complete. Frederic Henry had believed in the war, and the war had wounded him. He then believed in love because it promised to pay back all the war had taken away. Now love was dead, as cold and lifeless as if it had never been.[32]

When it was all over, Lt. Henry tried to feel something about it. He ran the nurses out and closed the door to shut out the world. He wanted to say good-by to Catherine, but "it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-by to a statue."[33] There was nothing there; the room was cold and empty and a cold and empty nothingness enveloped him as he finally went back to the hotel in the rain.

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[31] "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," p. 383.

[32] John W. Aldridge, After the Lost Generation (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), p. 10. The death of love, which proved to be a major frustration to the "lost generation," will be discussed more fully in the second half of this chapter.

[33] A Farewell to Arms, p. 332.

The Death of Life

It is this sense of complete emptiness, this feeling of nothingness and belief in nothing, that became the philosophy of the lost generation after the war. Nihilism became the religion of these who had made their "separate peace" with God and with mankind. They had believed in the war, and it had betrayed them; they had believed in patriotism, and the big words had betrayed them; they had believed in love, and it had betrayed them; they had believed in God, and He had betrayed them. There was nothing left to believe in--so they would believe in that. "Nada" they called it.

Everything abstract, all ideals, had been proved false; therefore life was now to be measured in terms of the present moment, today. Because of life's dirty tricks and death's omnipresence, there might not be a tomorrow. Experience was, furthermore, to be measured in terms of sensual reactions. Since the people in Hemingway's world could no longer respond to ideals, and since they no longer had a sense of moral values of good and bad, according to the new rules, what was good was what one felt good after and what was bad was what one felt bad after.[34] Good food, good drink, good companionship--male and sometimes female, but no romantic entanglements (remember what happened to Henry and Catherine)--lots of sex, good times, lots of laughs, nice cafés, and clean, well-lighted

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[34] Hemingway himself expressed it this way: "So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after."

places--these were the safe things; these a person could believe in.[35]

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[35]In his article "The Missing All" John Peale Bishop makes a pertinent comment about the forces behind the "lost Generation": "The most tragic thing about the war was not that it made so many dead men, but that it destroyed the tragedy of death. Not only did the young suffer in the war, but every abstraction that would have sustained and given dignity to their suffering. The war made the traditional morality inacceptable; it did not annihilate it; it revealed its immediate inadequacy. So that at its end the survivors were left to face, as they could, a world without values." (McCaffery, p. 273.)

"For them life had begun with violence and war and nothing else was real--nothing was quite real, that is, but physical sensation . . . . To Hemingway as to others at the moment only the primitive was real, the plane to which life was reduced if men were to survive, if they were to endure the monstrous conditions of existence at the front and accept as normal the perpetual presence of death." (Van Wyck Brooks, "The Religion of Art," Saturday Review [December 1, 1951], p. 52.)

Philip Young points out the limitations of Hemingway's world: Hemingway's world is one in which things do not grow and bear fruit, but explode, break, decompose, or are eaten away. It is saved from total misery by visions of endurance, competence, and courage, by what happiness the body can give when it is not in pain, by interludes of love that cannot outlast the furlough, by a pleasure in the countries one can visit, or fish and hunt in, and the cafés one can sit in, and by very little else. Hemingway's characters do not 'mature' in the ordinary sense, do not become 'adult.' It is impossible to picture them in a family circle, going to the polls to vote, or making out their income tax returns. It is a very narrow world. . . ." (Young, pp. 39-40.)

But Irving Howe's praise of Hemingway's ability to create "universality" within the confines of that world is typical of many similar tributes that the critics have paid: "Hemingway's vision was narrow, but there were moments when he wrote with a sudden enlarged sensibility, so that one forgot the limits of his stance and style, feeling that here, for these few pages, one was in the presence of a great writer. There is a little story called 'A Clean Well-Lighted Place' and a passage in that story where the older waiter explains to the younger one that he must be patient with the homeless men sitting in the café, because everyone needs a clean well-lighted place in which to stare at his aloneness. I cannot imagine that this story will ever be forgotten." ("The Conquest of Panic," New Republic [July 24, 1961], p. 20.)

II. THE FRUSTRATIONS OF "THE DEAD"

In the disillusionments suffered by the hero and the heroine of A Farewell to Arms, the pattern has been set. An entire generation of "wounded" souls must now go in search of new values to live by (or to die by). But until they find those values their lives will remain characterized by futility, emptiness, insomnia, and sex.

Futility

> Here we go round the prickly pear
> Prickly pear prickly pear
> Here we go round the prickly pear
> At five o'clock in the morning. [36]

Like Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry, all the members of the lost generation had been exposed to life's dirty tricks. Having experienced their personal disillusionments with life, with love, with God, with the war, they have bade "farewell" to the arms of war and the arms of love. Lady Brett Ashley and Jake Barnes are two such people.

Jake and Brett had been lovers before Jake's war wound made it impossible for him to continue their relationship. Had it not been for the war they could have had, in Lady Brett's words, "such a damned good time together." But after Jake's "emasculation," Brett had fled from one lover to another, seeking a substitution for Jake, but only finding emptiness and unfulfillment with each

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[36] Several verses from T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" appear in this chapter.

romance until in the end she wound up back where she started--hopelessly with Jake.

Brett and Jake and the other expatriots in The Sun Also Rises ("a dissolute collection of amusing but aimless people")[37] have suffered the same loss of faith in love and big words and religion as did Catherine and Henry. They have made their separate peace and have gone off to Spain to try to pull themselves together and put some meaning back into their existence. They go aimlessly in circles, searching for something which invariably turns out to be the same empty nothingness they started with. Ironically, the only thing which seems to give life any meaning is death, which they watch religiously every day in the bull ring. (As Jake points out, "Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bull-fighters.")[38] One would think that death to the "lost generation" would be the biggest nothingness of all, since they have no religious faith to support a theory of life beyond the grave; but as it turns out, they do not see it quite that way.[39] The ordered precision of

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[37]Young, op. cit., p. 10.

[38]Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 10.

[39]It was about this time that Hemingway (in Death in the Afternoon) expressed his own disgust with an American poet who had written: "Life is real! Life is earnest!/ And the grave is not its goal." "And where did they bury him?" Hemingway wants to know. "And what became of the reality and the earnestness?" Again he praised the Spanish for their common sense about death: "They could not produce a poet who would write a line like that. They know death is the unescapable reality, the one thing any man may be sure

the bullfight exemplifies the order they are trying to regain in their own muddled lives, and the ritual itself (with the sacrifice of the bull, on a hot sunny day, seeming almost to be an act of propitiation to the god of death) is a kind of pagan substitute for the religious faith they have lost. They regret their loss of faith. They would like to believe, but, as the ninety-four year old Count Greffi expresses it in A Farewell to Arms, "somehow it does not come."[40] Jake wanted to pray and tried to pray in the cathedral,[41] but somehow it just did not come. Brett is nervous and tense and out of place in the cathedral;[42] she is much more at ease when the natives pose her as a kind of lovely, sterile sun goddess they can dance around in a quasi-pagan ritual.[43]

The action of the novel consists of drinking, fishing, going to bull fights, and the promiscuous affairs of Brett Ashley.

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of; the only security . . . They think a great deal about death and when they have a religion they have one which believes that life is much shorter than death. Having this feeling they take an intelligent interest in death and when they can see it being given, avoided, refused and accepted in the afternoon for a nominal price of admission they pay their money and go to the bull ring. . . ." (p. 266) And the members of the "lost generation" join them there.

John Killinger, on this point, compares Hemingway to the existentialists in his philosophy that life has meaning only in the face of death; that the "authentic life" must be lived in the constant presence of death. (Hemingway and the Dead Gods, p. 96-97.)

[40] A Farewell to Arms, p. 263.

[41] The Sun Also Rises, p. 97.

[42] Ibid., p. 208.

[43] Ibid., p. 155.

> Nothing leads anywhere in the book, and that is perhaps the real point of it. The action comes full circle--imitates, that is, the sun of the title, which also rises, only to hasten to the place where it arose. . . .[44]

Indeed, the most prevalent feeling in the book is not that the earth abides forever (which Hemingway asserted was the true message of the book), "but that motion is endless, circular, and unavailing. . . . the echo of 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity' is nearly as strong." The prominent message is that for Jake and Brett and their expatriot friends--life is futile.[45]

Emptiness

> Remember us--if at all--not as lost
> Violent souls, but only
> As the hollow men

The real poignancy of this "other kind of death" is felt even more strongly in some of Hemingway's stories. His haunting pictures cut like a knife into our awareness, and scenes such as these are not soon forgotten.

He was an old man, seventy-six years old, and suddenly his world was falling apart. In the evacuation of his town he had had to leave his animals behind. Two goats, a cat, eight pigeons--they were his family. It was Easter Sunday, the day the Christian world rejoices in "new life" and "rebirth" and "victory over death." But he was an old man and his life was over that day as he sat at

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[44]Young, loc. cit.

[45]Ibid., p. 11.

the bridge, too tired to go on and worrying about his animals. New life, rebirth, victory over death meant nada to him. He might exist a few years longer, but at seventy-six years old his "life" had ended.[46]

Evacuation is again the scene as a thirty-mile long procession of carts, people, cattle are "herded" down the road in the rain. It is a procession with "no end and no beginning." But ironically it does mark an "end," for these people are leaving their "lives" behind as they trudge dumbly along the muddy road; and it marks a "beginning," for a woman in one of the carts is giving birth.[47]

The scene shifts to a therapy hospital in Milan, where wounded soldiers come for treatment with machines that will "make them good as new." Before the story is completed, however, one is aware that no "machines" will ever repair the real damage that has been done to these victims of war's disaster. Their real wounds are revealed at odd moments of anger and bitterness, such as that when the major lashes out at the American for planning to marry, only to reveal later that his wife,"who was very young and whom he had not married until he was definitely invalided out of the war," had just died unexpectedly of pneumonia (another of life's "dirty tricks"). War and love had betrayed him and left him bitter about

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[46]"Old Man at the Bridge," p. 78-80.

[47]"Chapter II" from In Our Time, p. 97.

life. A man "should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose."[48] His wife's death was the wound that made him empty, that removed all meaning from his existence. The major is "dead to life" as the story closes. Nothing made much difference to him any more "because he only looked out of the window."[49]

The American in that same story reveals his psychic wound in moments of aloneness:

> . . . walking home at night through the empty streets with the cold wind and all the shops closed, trying to keep near the street lights, I knew that I would never have done such things [as the other soldiers had done to get their medals], and I was very much afraid to die, and often lay in bed at night by myself, afraid to die and wondering how I would be when I went back to the front again.[50]

He had had to face himself in a crisis, and he had not measured up to his own ideals. He had been a coward; he was a coward now; he feared that he would remain a coward--because he is afraid to die. Disillusionment with oneself in the matter of courage is, for the people in Hemingway's world, one of the worst "deaths" of all. It has been said that in our culture it is possible for a man to go through his entire life without having once to discover whether he is a coward. Hemingway, however, "forced his readers to consider such possibilities, and through the clenched shape of his stories

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[48]"In Another Country," p. 271.

[49]Ibid., p. 272.

[50]Ibid., p. 270.

he kept insisting that no one can escape; moments of truth come to all of us."[51]

Insomnia

"I am one of those who like to stay late at the café," the older waiter said. "With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night. . . . Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be some one who needs the café." He explains further: "This is a clean and pleasant café. It is well lighted. . . . It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant."

> What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada. . . .
>
> Now, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep. After all, he said to himself. It is probably only insomnia. Many must have it.[52]

In two other stories, "A Way You'll Never Be" and "Now I Lay Me," Hemingway delineates the predicament of the shell-shocked soldier who cannot sleep for fear of dying. In the first story Nick Adams reveals that he cannot sleep without a light on. And even then, when he does manage to doze, he has wild nightmares about a long yellow house and a wide river that leave him, when he

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[51]Irving Howe, "Hemingway: the Conquest of Panic," New Republic (July 24, 1961), pp. 19-20.

[52]"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," pp. 382-383.

finally wakes, "soaking wet," and "more firghtened than he had ever been in a bombardment."[53] The portrait of the insomniac grows even clearer in "Now I Lay Me."

> If I should die before I wake
> I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Those lines from the nursery-rhyme prayer contain clues to the subconscious trauma of the sleepless soldier. He had been critically wounded at the front. He had seen the face of death; he had died then, but somehow was miraculously restored to life. Now he is afraid to sleep in the dark, because sleep in darkness is the nearest living state to death. "If I should die before I wake" is one great fear of the soldier; but an even greater horror is that he has no "Lord his soul to take." No longer believing in God or in religion, he finds no comfort in that prayer, or in any other prayer; it just doesn't come. His childhood's faith is dead. His only reality is to stay alive--to not die--and to do that he cannot risk going to sleep in the dark.

> I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. It had been that way ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and then go off and then come back. . . . it had started to go since, in the nights, just at the moment of going off to sleep, and I could only stop it by a very great effort.
> . . . . . .
> If I could have a light I was not afraid to sleep, because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark.[54]

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[53]"A Way You'll Never Be," p. 409.

[54]"Now I Lay Me," pp. 363, 367.

The insomniac devises many ways of staying awake. Sometimes he thinks of fishing, visiting all the streams he has ever fished in or even making up new ones. Or some nights he will say his prayers over and over, trying to pray for all the people he has ever known. Or he will try to remember everything that had ever happened to him. On nights when he can not remember his prayers, being able to get only so far as "On earth as it is in heaven," he tries to remember everything else: all the animals in the world, all the birds, all the cities, the countries and so on. Or he can always listen--to the sounds and the silence of the night.[55]

Sex

The orderly in the room with Nick ("Now I Lay Me") is also awake, and sometimes they talk the night away together. John is a staunch advocate of marriage. To him it is the panacea of all ills. "Every man ought to be married," he said.[56] After the war he was going home to America, "and he was very certain about marriage and knew it would fix up everything."

But Nick (along with the rest of the 'lost generation') does not share John's enthusiasm for marriage. In fact, most of the men and women in this frustrated, psychologically upset post-war world are completely disillusioned about marriage and want no part of love. (Subconsciously they hunger for love, real love, the kind

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[55] Ibid., 363-367.

[56] Ibid., p. 370.

of love Catherine and Henry had had and lost. But they are afraid to gamble any more with their emotions for fear of being hurt. They took the advice of the major in the therapy hospital to heart: "a man should not become attached to something he can lose.")

When Catherine Barkley died, love toppled from the throne, and the goddess of sex (Brett Ashley) reigned in her stead. Values were turned topsy-turvy in the war, and somehow "the complete relationship that unites sex and love had been lost, divorced into either love without sex, as in Jake, or sex without love as in Brett and her friends."[57] Doubtless, the confusion came about because of the new rules: only concrete, sensual experiences are real. Love is an ideal, and there is no more belief in that. Sex is thus interpreted as love, with frustrating results: Luz (the nurse in "A Very Short Story") forsook Nick (real love) for what she thought was love with an Italian major. The short-lived, purely physical affair left her with nothing; she had hoped for marriage. Brett and Jake love each other, but they refuse to believe in that love because Jake's wound denies them sex. Liz Coates, who wanted love, found sex without love a disillusionment. And the sad case of Helen Gordon further illustrates the perversion of values. What was thought to be love was really only sex, and the disillusionment left both women and men cynical and bitter.

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[57]Theodore Bardacke, "Hemingway's Women," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work, ed. John K. M. McCaffery (World Publishing Company, 1950), p. 308.

The most bitter denunciations about love are made in To Have and Have Not, Hemingway's novel that pictures the post-war world around Havana and Key West during the depression-prohibition era. This novel pictures a generation lost in materialistic values and sex perversion. The "haves" have what they sought, what they felt meant everything during the depression years: they have wealth and social position and luxury but nothing to go with it but shallow, empty lives without purpose and without love. F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel of the Twenties, The Great Gatsby, deals with the materialistic perversion of the lost generation in the day when the great measurement of success was "the god money" and when a man's value was measured in terms of his wealth. Furthermore, it made no difference how one acquired his money; a man's character did not matter one way or the other. In Hemingway's version of the story, it isn't money that measures a man's worth, but sex. The "haves" are "have nots" in terms of a satisfactory love life. They are void of love, and even their sex lives have become perverted. On the other hand, the "have nots" in wealth are really the "haves," because of their success in marital relationships. (Harry's satisfying relationship with his adoring Marie is more than sex; they have rediscovered love.)[58]

In the face of such widespread disillusionment, the men of the lost generation wanted no more of marriage. Catherine had

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[58] Ibid., p. 315.

died; the major's wife had died. Love was an entanglement that could hurt. As Krebs put it--he (the post-war male) had had enough of complications; he wanted no more consequences. A man should not become attached to something he can lose. Sex can be impersonal; love cannot be. Therefore the male of the lost generation preferred only sex. His day dreams of Trudy, the Indian girl up in Michigan, typified the kind of relationship he wanted: sex without the apron strings, no complications, no consequences, no responsibility. Sex without love and without consequences equals sterility; thus, Jake's impotence in a way symbolized the subconscious desire of all men of the lost generation. The man's world wanted no part of hearth, home, family; woman was to be a commodity--at best a companion, a "chum."

In the light of these "new values" plus the fact that there is no longer any desire on the man's part for "the home fires to be kept burning," how does woman manage to fit into the picture? She tried, but with frustrating results. To compete in this "man's world," woman clamored for her "freedom." Womanhood gave up her Victorian pedestal and stepped down to equality. She bobbed her hair, wore mannish clothes, learned to smoke and to swear and tried to play her part as a chum--one of the boys. Actually, she became "de-sexed." (Brett is seen with a group of homosexuals in The Sun Also Rises and "is very much with them.")[59]

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[59]The Sun Also Rises, p. 20.

The Brett Ashleys, the Dorothy Hollises, the Helene Bradleys, the neurotic, love-starved nymphomaniacs, the homosexuals, the prostitutes, and the almost universal promiscuity that appear to characterize the era testify to the unhealthy worship of sex. This was a shallow-minded, sensation-crazed generation--selfish and pathetic!

Because of these upside-down values, marriages in Hemingway's stories always die. They never succeed for one of several reasons: (1) too many entanglements--the man (or sometimes the woman) feels "tied down"; (2) there are "consequences," a pregnancy, meaning responsibility (and no one can forget what happened to Catherine); (3) the isolation of sex from love leads to frustration and inevitable divorce.

In story after story the inevitable happens. In "A Canary for One" an American couple are returning to Paris to set up separate residences; they really could shatter the illusions of the lady with the canary, who thinks that American men make the best husbands.[60] Nick Adams did eventually try marriage after all, but in "Cross-Country Snow" his happiness is running out. Skiing days with George are almost over, and Nick is terribly moody and upset because Helen is going to have a baby. In this story Nick still prefers male companionship to the complications of home and family life, but the shackles of marriage are closing in. One gets the

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[60] "A Canary for One," pp. 337-342.

impression that this is "the end of something" again--the end of Nick's freedom.[61] Complications are also closing in on a young couple who are sitting at a train stop; he is trying to persuade her to have an abortion.[62] Things have not turned out well for Mr. and Mrs. Elliot either. They have been married a long time, and (this is a switch!) they want a pregnancy but have had no success. They, too, are disillusioned about marriage and love. Cornelia, a Southern lady, and Hubert, a prissy perfectionist, were brought up under the Victorian notion that sex was not discussed; sex was naughty and only a necessary evil after marriage--for the purpose of having children. Their ideas about love and sex are as confused as those of the rest of the lost generation, and they, too, are unable to cope with the frustrations of married life.[63]

Of all the stories, however, one seems to capture the lost generation's predicament about love better than any other. "Cat in the Rain" reviews the plight of an unhappy couple who want different things from marriage: she wants love and warmth and children (all symbolized by the cat); she wants to let her hair grow long and be feminine--a woman, a wife, and a mother. He wants to keep things uncomplicated; he does not want a family; he prefers her hair short; a pal, a companion, a mistress--that is more like

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[61]"Cross-Country Snow," pp. 183-188.

[62]"Hills like White Elephants," pp. 273-278.

[63]"Mr. and Mrs. Elliot," pp. 158-163.

what he has in mind. The rain clearly symbolizes death; the cat, the old-fashioned values of womanhood and love. The story, then, is symbolically and appropriately titled "The Death of Love."[64]

Love is indeed dead for the lost generation, and the burial takes place in "An Alpine Idyll." On a hot spring day in the valley as two young men (Nick and John) come into the little Alpine village, they pass a sexton and a peasant filling a grave. "In the bright May morning the grave-filling looked unreal." At the tavern they hear the story. The corpse was the peasant's wife. She had died in December, but he had been unable to bring her into town for burial till the snow melted. The report stated that she had died of heart trouble, but her face was in such a state that the priest did not want to bury her. The peasant said he had found her lying across the bed, dead. He put her in the woodshed, propped up against the wall. Her mouth was open. When he went out to chop wood, he hung the lantern from her mouth![65] He didn't mean to hurt his wife; he had loved her; he had "loved her fine." But she was dead--nada. Love, like everything else after the war was dead--"like saying good-by to a statue."

There is a scene in A Farewell to Arms that captures better than any other one the total disillusionment suffered by the "lost

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[64]"Cat in the Rain," pp. 167-170.

[65]"An Alpine Idyll," pp. 343-349.

generation." Lt. Henry had gone out for breakfast. On the way back to the hospital to check Catherine's progress, he notices a dog nosing at a garbage can on the street.

> "What do you want?" I asked and looked in the can to see if there was anything I could pull out for him; there was nothing on top but coffee-grounds, dust and some dead flowers.
>
> "There isn't anything, dog." I said.[66]

What a hopeless picture of the futility of life. What symbols could be more useless and lifeless: coffee-grounds, dust, dead flowers, and Lt. Henry's hollow words: "There isn't anything, dog."

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

That is the way the world ended for a generation that "died" in the disillusionment of World War I.

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[66] A Farewell to Arms, p. 315.

CHAPTER VI

AN APPROACH TO DYING

Having suffered their wounds, having been awakened to the reality and omnipresence of death, having had their illusions and their dreams shattered, the men and women in Hemingway's world are now faced with the problem of survival. "I did not care what it was all about," Jake Barnes laments in The Sun Also Rises. "All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about."[1]

This was the problem facing the generation disillusioned by war who searched for new values to live by--in Paris, in Spain, in the Caribbean, and in the wilds of Africa. Irving Howe describes nihilism and its effect on the "lost generation" as

> an encompassing condition of moral disarray in which one has lost those tacit impulsions which permit life to continue and suddenly begins to ask questions that would be better left unasked. There is a truth which makes our faith in human existence seem absurd, and no one need contemplate it very long. Hemingway did--in his early writing. Nick, Jake, Brett, Henry, prize-fighters, matadors, rich Americans, failed writers--all are at the edge and almost ready to surrender and be done with it, yet holding on to whatever fragment of morale, whatever scrap of honor, they can. Theirs is the heroism of people who have long given up the idea of being heroic and wish only to get by without being too messy.[2]

The world's rules for living having betrayed them--religion,

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[1]Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 148.

[2]Irving Howe, "The Conquest of Panic," New Republic (July 24, 1961), pp. 19-20.

patriotism, and love having proved false--it remained for the "lost generation" to formulate a new code for survival, a new set of values to live by. "Every man must learn to define his own moral conditions and then live up to them."[3] By setting up new standards against which to measure behavior, it might be possible for a man to retain his dignity, to "get by."

People in Hemingway's world are classified according to their ability to live by "the code." They fall into one of three categories: (1) heroes, people who are trying to live by the code; (2) cowards, the ones who cannot cope with life (particularly with their own fear of dying) and do not measure up to the code; and (3) code heroes, those enviable few who have mastered the code and thereby serve as examples for the others.

I. HEROES

In discussing Hemingway heroes the plural term is really a misnomer, for "the protagonists of many of his works . . . so resemble each other that we have come to speak of them in the singular."[4] The "hero" of each major story or novel is essentially

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[3]Mark Spilka, "The Death of Love in The Sun Also Rises," from Twelve Original Essays on Great Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro reprinted in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert P. Weeks (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 138.

[4]Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (No. 1 of Pamphlets on American Writers Series, eds. William Van O'Connor, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), p. 3.

the same person. All have similar backgrounds, similar problems, similar traits. Incidentally, the heroines, too, as Philip Young has observed, are essentially the same girl, though she grows progressively younger in each novel as the hero ages.[5]

The hero always follows more or less the same stereotyped pattern: he has suffered disillusionments of one kind or another while growing up in a middle-class American "small town"; he participated in World War I, frequently in the ambulance service, and received medals for bravery; he is a wounded man, the wound shifting in anatomical location but always leaving him physically and emotionally scarred; he has experienced a narrow escape from death which has left him nervous, shell-shocked, unsettled; he is trying to "hold on to himself" through sheer self-discipline to keep from going to pieces; he is an expatriate, having made a separate peace with the war and also a break with society; he suffers from insomnia and cannot sleep without a light in his room for fear of dying; he is plagued with nightmares when he does sleep; he tries to avoid thought as much as possible, but he is afflicted with memories; he has been deeply hurt by an unhappy experience with love and has abandoned that ideal along with all other abstractions; he wants no more of romantic entanglements, consequences, or bonds of marriage; he prefers male companionship and the freedom of outdoor

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[5] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

activities; because he has lost faith in God, he cannot pray; he is trying to find meaning in life through an understanding of death; he is often aware of the need to live life intensely, knowing that at any moment it could be taken away; his outlook on life is a fatalistic one in which survival and success depend largely on luck, and, characteristically, he never has any luck; he is above all a man alone, who values "clean, well-lighted places" and who is continually searching for "the good place to camp."

Nick Adams

The prototype for all Hemingway heroes is Nicholas Adams (Nick), the hero in a large number of stories in Hemingway's three short story publications: In Our Time, Men Without Women, and Winner Take Nothing. When the "Nick" stories are taken together and read in a roughly chronological order, the effect is that of reading a novel, for the sum total of these stories is a biographical rendering of Nick Adams' boyhood and young manhood.

In the Michigan stories Nick parallels Huck Finn or George Willard as "the boy shattered by the world he grows up in." In Our Time particularly is a record of "the shocking effects of the modern age upon the forming character of a sensitive boy."[6] Philip Young, in referring to Nick's experiences, speaks of the theme as

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[6]John Aldridge, After the Lost Generation (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), p. 27.

one of the great American "myths," for they epitomize the "meeting of innocence and experience."[7]

> We start out smiling and well disposed to the world and our fellow men. We see ourselves in the image of a naturally good, innocent, and simple boy, eager and expectant. But in the process of our going out into the world we get struck down, somehow, and after that it is hard for us to put ourselves all the way back together again.[8]

And Nick goes on to show us that "there is nothing triumphant about the beating which innocence takes, or about what happens to it after it is beaten."[9]

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[7] Young, op. cit., p. 37.

[8] Ibid., p. 38.

[9] Ibid. Philip Young's observations concerning similarities between Huck Finn and the Hemingway hero are too interesting to pass by without noting. Moreover, his comments shed much light on the formative background of the Hemingway hero.

Many critics, Young notes, have claimed that Hemingway had wandered too far away from American tradition and had "got lost." They felt he should "find a way home" to such tradition as might be found in that "most American of all novels," Huckleberry Finn. "The curious truth is that if the pattern in Hemingway's work discussed here--the pattern of violence, psychological wounding, escape and death--has any validity, then Hemingway never has got very far from Huckleberry Finn." Careful reading of that novel will show the adventures of Huck Finn and those of Nick Adams to be remarkably alike: "'It made me so sick I most fell out of the tree,' says Huck of his exposure to the Grangerford-Shepherdson feud. 'I ain't a-going to tell all that happened. . . . I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night to see such things--lots of times I dream about them.'"

Like Hemingway, "Twain based his novel largely on experiences he himself had undergone as a boy, or had known intimately of, and had never quite got over. (We know, for instance, that he witnessed four murders.)" The results of all this violence are clear:

"Huck's overexposure to violence finally wounds him. Each episode makes a mark, and each mark leaves a scar. Every major episode in the novel . . . ends in violence, in physical brutality, and usually in death. All along the way are bloodshed and pain,

Nick's first recorded shattering blow comes in an Indian camp, where he holds a basin for his doctor-father and watches a Caesarian birth performed with a jack knife and without anesthetic for either the screaming mother or for the husband in the overhead bunk, who couldn't bear his wife's torture any longer and had, by the time the operation was over, "cut his head nearly off with a

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and there are thirteen separate corpses." (Hemingway almost matches this record in To Have and Have Not with twelve killings.) "The effect of all this . . . is that it serves to wound Huck Finn. Either tortured with nightmares or unable to sleep at all ('I couldn't, somehow, for thinking'), he is 'made sick' by--among other things--the thought of a man left alone to drown, by the sale of some colored servants, and by the departure of the Duke and the King, tarred, feathered, and astraddle a rail. In addition he is becoming disgusted with mankind in general. Exposed to more bloodshed, drowning, and sudden death than he can handle, he is himself their casualty. And from his own experience Mark Twain could predict: Huck isn't ever going to get over them.

"Here, transparently, is the pattern of violence and psychological wounding we have been reading in Hemingway. . . . A damaged boy, tortured by the terror he has witnessed and been through, afflicted with insomnia and bad dreams, and voluntarily divorced from the society in which he had grown up . . . .

"The parallel is complete. In both Huck and Nick, Hemingway's generic hero, we have a sensitive, rather passive but courageous and masculine boy, solitary and out of doors, who is dissatisfied with respectability, chiefly as represented by a Bible-quoting woman of the house. Each runs away from home. 'Home' in both cases--St. Petersburg or northern Michigan--was a place of violence and pain, but though it was easy to flee the respectability, off on their own both boys came up against brutality harder than ever. Both were hurt by it and both ended by rebelling utterly against a society that sponsored, or permitted, such horror. Nick decides that he is not a patriot, and makes his own peace with the enemy; Huck decides that he will take up wickedness, and go to hell. He lights out for the territory, the hero for foreign lands. Huck and Nick are very nearly twins. Two of our most prominent heroes, Huck and the Hemingway hero, are casualties whom the 'knowledge of evil,' which Americans are commonly said to lack, has made sick." (pp. 35-37.)

razor."[10] The scene prompts Nick to ask such questions as "Do many men kill themselves, Daddy?" "Is it hard to die, Daddy?" Reassured by his father that "not very many" men take their own lives and that dying is "pretty easy" though "it all depends," Nick turns his young mind to thoughts of other things: "In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die."[11]

Other stories show Nick in less violent scenes but each in its own way unpleasant or upsetting. We see him as he experiences uncertainty about his father's courage and complete dissatisfaction with his mother's religious platitudes ("The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife"); as he suffers the end of an adolescent love affair ("The End of Something," "Three-Day Blow"); as he gets thrown off a freight train and meets a crazy ex-prizefighter who nearly beats him up and his companion, a "polite Negro hobo--even more sinister in his own way"[12] ("The Battler"); as he is "made sick" from seeing a man refuse to run from or stand up to gangsters who are going to murder him ("The Killers"); as he is "somewhat prematurely introduced to the seamy realms of prostitution and homosexuality"[13] ("The Light of the

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[10]"Indian Camp," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 94. All page references to short stories in this chapter are from this source.

[11]Ibid., p. 95.

[12]Young, op. cit., p. 5.

[13]Ibid., p. 6.

World"); as he is wounded in World War I and makes his separate peace with the enemy, marking the beginning of a long break with organized society that stays with Hemingway and his "hero" through several books and into the late '30's. ("Chapter VI" from In Our Time); as his nerves get the better of him and his nightmares nearly drive him out of his mind ("A Way You'll Never Be"); as he lies awake afraid to sleep without a light for fear of dying in the night, trying all sorts of schemes to stay awake in the dark, plagued with memories of the past--in Michigan and in the war ("Now I Lay Me"); as he becomes aware that others in his generation have also been torn apart by the war and life's dirty tricks ("In Another Country"); as he is further "wounded" by an unhappy love affair with a nurse in the hospital where he is recuperating from his war wound ("A Very Short Story"); as he fishes alone in a Michigan stream after the war, seeking order, peace, and security to replace the shattered nerves, traumatic experiences, and disillusionments that have come to him in the war, trying desperately to pull himself together and preserve his sanity so that he can go on living, being very careful to stay clear of the swamp and to fish carefully by the rules (the "Big Two-Hearted River" stories). And it appears that Nick might make it; he might survive the "wounds" after all, as we see him respond positively to a shocking situation ("An Alpine Idyll"). Whereas in an earlier situation he was so upset by the sight of a man waiting passively to be murdered that he wanted to get out of that town, "healthy tissue is now

growing over his wounds," and the point of the Alpine story "lies in the development of his defenses."[14] Two last scenes of Nick show him unhappily facing the responsibilities of parenthood, really preferring bachelor freedom and male companionship ("Cross-Country Snow"); and finally as he, on a hunting trip with his son, is troubled by thoughts of his own father's death ("Fathers and Sons.").[15]

From these various stories the character of Nick Adams, boy then man, has gradually emerged. He is "honest, virile, but . . . very sensitive";[16] an outdoor male with much nerve, but quite nervous.

> It is important to understand this Nick, for soon, under other names in other books, he is going to be known half the world over as the "Hemingway hero": every single one of these men has had, or has had the exact equivalent of, Nick's childhood, adolescence, and young manhood. This man will die a thousand times before his death, and although he will learn how to live with some of his troubles, and how to overcome others, he will never completely recover from his wounds as long as Hemingway lives and records his adventures.[17]

Following Nick Adams, the other Hemingway heroes pass in review, and one can indeed discern distinct likenesses. The most

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[14] Ibid., p. 7.

[15] It is not until a later story when another hero, Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls, returns to this situation that we learn the reason for Nick's troubled thoughts: Doctor Adams committed suicide.

[16] Young, loc. cit.

[17] Ibid. The ambiguous reference of "his" in the last line of this quote is probably intentional; for in truth, Hemingway and his hero are biographical "twins," sharing the same adventures. The real prototype of the Hemingway hero is not Nick after all, but Hemingway himself.

significant thing to remember about Nick is that through him, the hero has made the discovery of death, disillusionment, and evil. He has had to learn how to cope with life again, now that he knows about death.

Lt. Frederic Henry

Like Nick, Lt. Frederic Henry has been disillusioned by war and love and has bidden "farewell" to both. He appears in A Farewell to Arms as the wounded, shell-shocked soldier who "dies" on the battlefield, who makes his separate peace with the enemy and tries to escape to Switzerland with the nurse he loves. Though his wound differs from Nick's (Nick suffered a spinal injury; Lt. Henry sustained injury to the knee, where Hemingway himself was hardest hit), Lt. Henry shares Nick's insomnia:

> I slept heavily except once I woke sweating and scared and then went back to sleep trying to stay outside of my dreams. I woke for good long before it was light and heard roosters crowing and stayed on awake until it began to be light. I was tired and once it was really light I went back to sleep again.[18]

Neither can he bear to think about anything, and he is plagued by memories he had rather forget: "The head was mine, but not to use, not to think with; only to remember and not too much remember."[19] ". . . I would eat and stop thinking. I would have to stop." "I was not made to think."[20] With Catherine he said, "Let's not think

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[18]Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 88.

[19]Ibid., p. 231.

about anything."[21] "I lay down on the bed and tried to keep from thinking."[22] "Sometimes I wonder about the front and about people I know but I don't worry. I don't think about anything much."[23] He had already lost faith in big words "like sacred, glorious and sacrifice,"[24] and he had abandoned religion and put love in its place. Then when Catherine dies, he is left hopelessly with nothing. Near the end of the story Henry has taken up the practice of seeking "well-lighted places" where there are people and where he can temporarily put aside his fear: "I went . . . out the door of the hospital and down the dark street in the rain to the café. It was brightly lighted inside and there were many people at the tables."[25] But at the conclusion of the story Frederic Henry is very much alone as he leaves the hospital and walks back to the hotel in the rain.

For Frederic Henry life is empty--nada. He has no code to live by: the old set of values has proved false, and nothing has yet been set up in their place. At this point the Hemingway hero cannot cope with life. He is lost in an abyss of despair and disillusionment. Survival is uncertain.

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[20] Ibid., p. 232.

[21] Ibid., p. 252.

[22] Ibid., p. 256.

[23] Ibid., p. 298.

[24] Ibid., p. 184.

[25] Ibid., p. 328.

Harold Krebs

The Hemingway hero comes home from the war in the person of Harold Krebs in "Soldier's Home." Yes, soldier is home, but "home" for the soldier is not a place that connotes peace, contentment, warmth, love, responsibility, happiness. Harold Krebs, the "hero" returned home late from the war, is a tortured soul who is bored, restless, and wants more than anything else to be left alone. His "separate peace" has become a break with society and humanity. Krebs watches the world go by from the front porch,[26] but he refuses to get out in the street and become a part of the activity. Where others are going on with life, Harold Krebs cannot, for he has experienced more than they have; he knows what they do not--that living, going through the motions of an everyday routine, is a futile business because life is filled with dirty tricks and death is always right there waiting for you to make a mistake. Harold Krebs wants love, but the memory of "Catherine's" death is still fresh in his memory. He wants no more of love's consequences and life's dirty tricks.[27] He wants no complications, no responsibilities; and he bitterly resents his mother's little "sermons" on the subject of how he ought to get a job and settle down and be a"credit to the community."[28] He hates his mother's preaching and

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[26]"Soldier's Home," p. 147.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 151.

praying over him and her sickeningly sweet probing and pushing and nagging about his future plans.[29] The hero who lost in the war his zest for life and love and his faith in religion cannot take any more "scenes"; "he had tried so to keep his life from being complicated."[30] Soldier's home is no longer his home at all: he is a stranger there, an uncomfortable stranger. He feels the desperate need to get away from there to find himself. He has got to escape.

At this point the Hemingway hero still cannot cope with life. He still does not have a code, but he is getting some ideas about one. The first rule is keep life simple, free from complications (one is not so vulnerable to hurt that way). Secondly, a man must learn to live without love; love is too complicated, and one cannot take the consequences. Furthermore, he has learned that "you can't go home again"; it just is not the same. The Hemingway hero will not be home again.

Jake Barnes

As Jake Barnes in The Sun Also Rises, the Hemingway hero has continued his separate peace, even though there is no longer a war. Having "parted with society and the usual middle-class ways, he lives in Paris with an international group of expatriates. . . all of them, in one way or another, blown out of the paths of

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[29] Ibid., p. 152.

[30] Ibid., pp. 153-154.

ordinary life by the war."[31] "Krebs" has made his escape. And as Jake Barnes he continues to try to escape by going from one country to another looking for nothing in particular, hoping to find something, but finally being forced to realize that, alas, there is no escape from the miseries inflicted upon him by the war. "Listen," he tries to tell one of his friends,"going to another country doesn't make any difference. I've tried all that. You can't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another. There's nothing to that."[32] If one cannot escape, his only salvation, then, is to learn how to survive: "I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it."[33] And in this book appear the crude beginnings of a code of behavior which Jake and his expatriate friends can believe in and through which they can regain some of their dignity and self-confidence.

He is wearing civilian clothes, but we can recognize Jake as the wounded hero: neurotic, plagued by insomnia and memories, "the man who can't sleep when his head starts to work, and who cries in the night."[34] Jake has not completely abandoned religion, but he finds it difficult to pray in the cathedral and even more difficult to believe that anything will come of his prayers. Although he

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[31]Young, op. cit., p. 10.

[32]Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 11.

[33]Ibid., p. 148.

[34]Young, loc. cit.

wants desperately to "feel religious," somehow it just doesn't come.[35] Knowing what had happened to Nick and to Lt. Henry in their shaking experiences with love, the Hemingway hero as Krebs wanted no part of love and its consequences. Ironically, as Jake, the hero gets his "wish"; but rather than finding relief, his agony is now intensified. Castrated in the war, Jake is denied love--or so he thinks, because to the Hemingway hero at this point, love means sex, nothing more. Nevertheless, Jake has accepted his fate and is learning to live with his wounds. Through self-discipline he is working out a code he can live by. The Hemingway hero is making progress.

Francis Macomber

The hero turns up next in Africa, only this "hero" almost missed making the list, because up until just moments before he died he was a coward. Francis Macomber learned the secret of "the code" almost too late. Bullied by his wife (instead of Krebs' mother) and enslaved by his own great fear of dying, he had long been "dead" as a man. He had never known what it was like to "live" until he was suddenly able to conquer his fear and look death in the eye. This is the greatest need of the Hemingway hero--to prove his own courage in the face of death. Since it was seeing death in the first place that sent him into shell shock and made him admit

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[35] The Sun Also Rises, p. 97.

his fear of dying, the hero needs to make himself face death and emerge victorious. That was what Macomber was learning how to do when he faced up to that wounded buffalo that was waiting to charge.[36] He might have won, too, had not one of life's dirty tricks (in the person of his jealous-of-her-own-power wife) got him from behind.[37] Nevertheless, the only time he had really "lived" was just before he died. For Francis Macomber it was a short, but happy life.[38]

Harry Street

Harry Street is another hero who falls victim to life's "dirty tricks." Harry is going to die through his own stupidity! He had neglected to put iodine on a simple little scratch a few days ago; it became infected; and now gangrene has set in.

> . . . a thorn had scratched his knee as they moved forward trying to photograph a herd of waterbuck standing, their heads up, peering while their nostirls searched the air, their ears spread wide to hear the first noise that would send them rushing into the bush. They had bolted, too, before he got the picture![39]

Talk about bad luck! Harry's death will be for no reason but his own carelessness--and he didn't even get the picture! Furthermore,

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[36]"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," pp. 33-35.

[37]Ibid., p. 36.

[38]Because Macomber is a transitional character (first coward, then hero) and because he is so closely tied in apprenticeship to code hero Robert Wilson, more will be said about him and his mastery of the code in other sections of this chapter.

[39]"The Snows of Kilimanjaro," p. 62.

they are in a remote area in Africa, and it does not seem likely that help will come in time. Face it, Harry. You're going to die.

As usual, the hero is wounded (a knee wound again) and wants to be left alone. Harry has never been able to adjust to life since the war. He married for money not love and hated himself and her because of it.[40] He is still nervous, even all these years after the war, and he lashes out violently at everyone around him--especially at her. It is as if he, knowing he is going to die, is trying to kill everything around him. "If you have to go away," she said, "is it absolutely necessary to kill off everything you leave behind?"[41] "Africa was where he had been happiest in the good time of his life, so he had come out here to start again."[42] "This was a pleasant camp under big trees against a hill, with good water . . . ."[43] Like the other heroes, Harry tries to avoid thinking: "You kept from thinking and it was all marvelous. You were equipped with good insides so that you did not go all to pieces that way, the way most of them had . . . ."[44] But his sleep is plagued with memories of times he would prefer to forget or of things which he had planned to write about some day but now would

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[40] Ibid., pp. 54, 58.

[41] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[42] Ibid., p. 59.

[43] Ibid., p. 53.

[44] Ibid., p. 59.

never get the chance. His memories reveal the same past as that of the other heroes: helping a deserter to escape (expatriates),[45] aimless good times skiing and gambling,[46] a love affair that he never got over,[47] a loss of faith in a God who would permit such suffering as that he had seen in the war[48]--all follow the familiar pattern. The wife shares Lt. Henry's idea that death is punishment for "getting out of bounds," for "breaking the rules": "I don't see why that had to happen to your leg. What have we done to have that happen to us?"[49] And Harry shares Henry's fatalistic attitude about death: the wife suggests that "You can't die if you don't give up." Harry's blunt, sarcastic reply, "Where did you read that? You're such a bloody fool" implies that it is useless to fight the inevitable.[50] What really bothers Henry most is his feeling that he has accomplished so little, and near death he begins to doubt the value of his life and works. He feels that he threw his life away and wasted his talent, "destroyed his talent by not using it," by "betrayals of himself and what he believed in, by drinking so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions."[51] Here, at last, is

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[45] Ibid., p. 56.

[46] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[47] Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[48] Ibid., p. 73

[49] Ibid., p. 55.

[50] Ibid.

a hero concerned with more about life than survival--it is not enough to have survived; one should have made a contribution. Harry realizes too late the tragedy of an empty, hollow existence which has betrayed talent and ideals, but the fact that he realizes it at all is progress indeed for the Hemingway hero. And, finally, Harry, like the others, defines for himself his personal code of honor: he regrets having lied to his wife about his love for her (his only love was his first); but "if he lived by a lie he should try to die by it,"[52] and he resolves to do so. Even in the wilds of Africa, Harry is able to die with a kind of decency.

Robert Jordan

For hero Robert Jordan death is inevitable; there is nothing anyone can do about it.

> They were all gone now and he was alone with his back against a tree.
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> . . . Everyone has to do this, one day or another. You are not afraid of it once you know you have to do it, are you? No. . . . I hate to leave it, is all. I hate to leave it very much and I hope I have done some good in it. I have tried to with what talent I had.
>
> I have fought for what I believed in for a year now. If we win here we will win everywhere. The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for and I hate very much to leave it. And you had a lot of luck, he told himself, to have had such a good life.[53]

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[51] Ibid., p. 60.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), pp. 466-467.

This is a Hemingway hero speaking? Obviously there have been tremendous changes in attitude about life and death. In the guise of Robert Jordan (For Whom the Bell Tolls), the Hemingway hero has made much progress in adjusting to life and accepting the reality of death. Many of the old signs are still there (the wound [leg injury again] and the aloneness are particularly prominent in the preceding passage), but the philosophy is all new. Robert Jordan does not feel empty, hollow, robbed of life as did Lt. Henry and Harry Street. On the contrary, rather than feeling down on his luck, he counts himself fortunate "to have had such a good life." Strange viewpoint for such a young man; by our standards his life should have been still ahead of him. Obviously the Spanish gypsies, with what Hemingway termed their "common sense" about the existence of death, have taught Robert Jordan much about the art of dying; for he is about to achieve what Jake Barnes was striving for: "grace under pressure"--the ability to accept the wound (physical or psychic) and make the best of what is left of his life.

Robert Jordan has learned well the lessons of life and death taught by the gypsies (particularly Pilar and old Anselmo) and in him the shell-shocked soldier of World War I is to regain much of his dignity. Jordon has not lost all of his fear of death (the novel concludes: "He could feel his heart beating against the pine needle floor of the forest."),[54] and he hates to die (a repeated

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[54] Ibid., p. 471.

admission, as evidenced in the quotation beginning this section; but he is able to "hold on to himself," to hold himself together, and we feel sure that he will make his exit gracefully.

Jordan is like the hero prototype in many ways. In addition to the wound and the aloneness, he, like the other heroes, is aware of the danger of too much thinking:

> It was much better to be gay. . . . It was like having immortality while you were still alive. . . . There were not many of them left though. No, there were not many of the gay ones left. . . . And if you keep on thinking like that, my boy, you won't be left either. Turn off the thinking . . . You're a bridge-blower now. Not a thinker.[55]

Like the others he has suffered a stroke of bad luck: he had survived the real danger of the bridge only to have his leg broken when his horse was shot in the escape.[56] Life is playing tricks again. He, like the others, has suffered a loss of faith in God and religion:

> Since we do not have God here any more, neither His son nor the Holy Ghost, who forgives? . . . If there were God, never would He have permitted what I have seen with my eyes. Let <u>them</u> have God. . . . Clearly I miss Him, having been brought up in religion. But now a man must be responsible to himself.[57]

And finally, like the others, Robert Jordan is denied a lifetime of love with the girl he loves. Like Nick, Lt. Henry, Jake, he sadly watches the girl depart--the end of something again.

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[55] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 17.

[56] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 461.

[57] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 41.

But even though Robert Jordan shares these similarities with the other Hemingway heroes, his response to each situation is quite different. Though he feels that too much thinking is bad, he does a good deal of thinking in the book--logical, sane, constructive thinking about who he is and why he is and what he has to do, about what is happening to him--and he tries to understand. He is better able to analyze what has happened and is happening to him: "You corrupt very easily, he thought. But was it corruption or was it merely that you lost the naïveté that you started with?"[58] He is not Lt. Henry, refusing to think about anything, or Jake Barnes, going in circles searching for he doesn't know what. Jordan realizes that there are certain things about life that one should not brood over, but he is not afraid to ask himself questions about himself and his life and to try to give honest answers.

Because of his sane reasoning, Robert Jordan no longer fears death. His code of doing a job well keeps his thoughts off dying: "And you, Robert Jordan, have no fear?"[59] "The Pilar told me [Maria is speaking] that we would all die tomorrow and that you know it as well as she does and that you give it no importance. She said this not in criticism but in admiration."[60] And later Robert Jordan reflects: "Sure. What if they were killed tomorrow? What did it

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[58] Ibid., p. 239.

[59] Ibid., p. 91.

[60] Ibid., p. 345.

matter as long as they did the bridge properly? . . . It didn't. You couldn't do these things indefinitely. . . . you weren't supposed to live forever."[61]

One reason that Robert Jordan can be so objective about dying is that he has made the most of his life day by day. Feeling death's presence so close at hand inspired him to make the most of every precious moment. The other heroes did not learn this secret--only Francis Macomber in the closing moments of his life. The key to facing death without fear and remorse is to live life intensely while it is yours. Life held nothing for Henry--empty; Jake wandered futilely searching; Krebs sat on the front porch apart from the mainstream of life; Harry Street hated himself for wasting his life in drink and good times and squandering his talent; Macomber guarded his life so closely because of his fear of dying that he never gave himself a chance to live. Through his own common sense, guided by Pilar and Anselmo, Robert Jordan makes none of these mistakes. "Maybe I have had all my life in three days," he ponders.[62]

> I suppose it is possible to live as full a life in seventy hours as in seventy years; granted that your life has been full up to the time that the seventy hours start and that you have reached a certain age.
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> . . . . . .
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> So if your life trades its seventy years for seventy hours I have that value now and I am lucky enough to know it. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of your lives, nor from now on, but there is only now, why then

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[61] Ibid., p. 355.

[62] Ibid.

> now is the thing to praise and I am very happy with it. Now, ahora, maintenant, heute. Now, it has a funny sound to be a whole world and your life.[63]

The negative nada of the postwar generation has been replaced by the positive now. Every day aware of the possibility of death, Robert Jordan has lived life intensely--his entire life in four days.

> I wish I were going to live a long time instead of going to die today because I have learned much about life in these four days; . . . I thought I knew about so many things that I know nothing of. I wish there was more time.
> . . . . . .
> If I die on this day it is a waste because I know a few things now. I wonder if you only learn them now because you are oversensitized because of the shortness of time? There is no such thing as shortness of time, though. . . . I have been all my life in these hills since I have been here. . . . I hate to leave a thing that is so good.[64]

One hates to see this hero die; but like Francis Macomber, he is luckier than most others because his life has been full and happy--though short.

It is, however, in Robert Jordan's love for Maria and in his attitude toward the Spanish people and their cause that he is most unlike the other heroes. The World War I generation's lost faith in love and in big words begins to return in Robert Jordan.

Jordan has known real love with Maria. Like the other love stories in Hemingway's world, this one is doomed to end unhappily. But there is not the total emptiness as there was for Lt. Henry, and there is no rain. Robert and Maria part in the sun, sadly,

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[63] Ibid., p. 166.

[64] Ibid., p. 381.

but comforted by the knowledge that their love had been good and the feeling that somehow--though neither fully understood--their bond would not be broken by death, that spiritually they would still be together. "Thou wilt go now, rabbit. But I go with thee. As long as there is one of us there is both of us. . . . Thou wilt go now for us both."[65] Unlike the other heroes, Robert Jordan is experiencing a return of faith--unsteady, perhaps; still not quite sure; but there.

Maria shares Catherine Barkley's faith in love. She gives her heart unselfishly to Jordan and has faith to believe that love with him will blot out the excruciating experiences of the past.[66] Robert, too, is beginning to learn unselfishness. He loves Maria tenderly, protectingly, unselfishly, and completely. "When I am with Maria I love her so that I feel literally, as though I would die and I never believed in that nor thought that it could happen."[67] The hero is not lying about love any more, pretending to feel when he does not, like Krebs or Harry Street. Robert Jordan does not have to live a lie, as Harry pledged to do; this love is real! Jordan realizes his good fortune, as he verbalizes it to himself in one of his thinking sessions:

> What you have with Maria, whether it lasts just through today and a part of tomorrow, or whether it lasts for a long life is

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[65] Ibid., p. 463.

[66] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[67] Ibid., p. 166.

> the most important thing that can happen to a human being . . . . you are lucky even if you die tomorrow.[68]

Robert's love for Maria is all tied in with his returning love for ideals, such as those represented by the Spanish cause. He discloses as much in an almost sonnet-like expression of his love for her (reminiscent of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spirit):

> I love thee as I love all that we have fought for. I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry. I love thee as I love Madrid that we have defended and as I love all my comrades that have died. And many have died. . . . But I love thee as I love what I love most in the world and I love thee more.[69]

On another occasion he is pondering what Maria has told him about her parents' death--how her father had proudly proclaimed, "Viva la República," as the Falangists had shot him standing against the slaughterhouse of the village and how her mother, who did not believe in the Republic but had believed in her husband, had cried out, "Long live my husband who is Mayor of this village."[70] Jordan had been particularly impressed by the words of Maria's mother:

> . . . you weren't supposed to live forever. Maybe I have had all my life in three days, he thought. If that's true I wish we would have spent the last night differently. But last nights are never any good. Last nothings are any good. Yes, last words were good sometimes. "Viva my husband who was Mayor of this town" was good.
>
> He knew it was good because it made a tingle run all over him when he said it to himself. He leaned over and kissed

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[68] Ibid., p. 305.

[69] Ibid., p. 348.

[70] Ibid., pp. 350-351.

> Maria who did not wake. In English he whispered very quietly, I'd like to marry you, rabbit. I'm very proud of your family.[71]

A proposal of marriage and the use of a word like proud, and practically in the same sentence, marks a revolution of attitude in the Hemingway hero.

The faith in big words is coming back. Jordan is proud of Maria's parents because of their patriotism in dying for a cause they believed in (as did her father) or for a person they loved (as did her mother). And that admiration is affirmation of his own beliefs: "You believe in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."[72] "He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it."[73]

> . . . you felt you were taking part in a crusade. That was the only word for it although it was a word that had been so worn and abused that it no longer gave its true meaning. . . . It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it. It was something that you had never known before but that you had experienced now and you gave such importance to it and the reasons for it that your own death seemed of complete unimportance; only a thing to be avoided because it would interfere with the performance of your duty.[74]

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[71] Ibid., p. 355.

[72] Ibid., p. 305.

[73] Ibid., p. 163.

[74] Ibid., p. 235.

It is this new-found faith in a cause and concern for humanity that further enables Robert Jordan to be so objective in his attitude toward death. He can believe in the fellowship of humanity--there is some good in all, even in Pablo, bad as he was--and he can believe that there are causes worth dying for.

Though he cannot yet accept a return of religious faith for himself, he wonders about the comforts that religion might offer a man facing death: "Who do you suppose has it easier? Ones with religion or just taking it straight? It comforts them very much but we know there is no thing to fear. It is only missing it that's bad."[75] Later, when in a moment of weakness he doubts his ability to see it through and die well or survive possible capture, interrogation, torture and seriously considers suicide as a way out, his code sustains him and enables him to resist the easy solution:

> AND IF YOU WAIT AND HOLD THEM UP EVEN A LITTLE WHILE OR JUST GET THE OFFICER THAT MAY MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. ONE THING WELL DONE CAN MAKE --[76]

He passes up the selfish termination of his own misery for the sake of making the way safer for the others.

And what of this officer who is riding toward the place where Robert Jordan is hiding? For Whom the Bell Tolls focuses attention several times on the enemy--a young Italian lieutenant, a skilled soldier who despises war and the part he must play in it,

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[75] Ibid., p. 468.

[76] Ibid., p. 470.

but who also believes in a cause and realizes that killing is a part of his duty if that cause is to survive. In Lieutenant Berrendo we easily recognize a mirror image of Robert Jordan. This fact adds to the poignancy of the book when, at the end, it is realized that these two men are going to die for their respective causes together. "Your nationality and your politics did not show when you were dead."[77] A bond of kinship unites all men, friend or foe, in the matter of facing death. There is every reason to believe that these two will both die well.

A young American who has found a new belief in love, in humanity, in dying for a cause, who is beginning to believe in a kind of spirituality beyond death, who is at least wondering if there is not, after all, some merit to religion (all "fads" which went out with World War I); a young man who has been able to master his fear of death by loving life intensely and by thinking of something and someone other than himself--the lost generation has surely found itself in Robert Jordan.

Colonel Richard Cantwell

There is a force "which compels human beings to linger about and haunt, ghostlike, the spot where some great and marked event" has given color to their life; the darker the tinge of color, the more irresistible the compulsion to return.[78] After thirty years

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[77] Ibid., p. 238.

[78] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter (New York: Rinehart, 1947), p. 74.

of defeating death, the Hemingway hero is able to return to the place of his first wounding and give vent to his bitterness about war.

Richard Cantwell is the Hemingway hero grown old, more in spirit than in age. He is only fifty-one, but he refers to it as "half a hundred years old," making it sound as if he has lived an eternity. He is a tired, worn out, battle-scarred old soldier, who has already had three heart attacks; another one will mean the end of his life. Now a peacetime army colonel, he comes on leave to Venice "to go duck shooting, to see his very young girlfriend and to die, all of which he does."[79] He also makes a pilgrimage to the exact spot where he (and Nick and Henry and Hemingway) was first wounded, to set up there a kind of spiteful monument as proof of his own courage and "immortality": he had cheated death then, and he has continued to defeat death for half a hundred years, which includes survival through a second world war; that, he feels, is quite a record and merits some kind of recognition. Richard Cantwell had been wounded before and many times since his experience at this particular place, but he explains why returning to <u>this place</u> was so important to him: he had been hit three times that winter, all small flesh wounds, and "had become quite confident of his immortality." But finally he did get hit "properly and for good." None of his other wounds had ever done to him what the first big

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[79]Young, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 17.

one did. "I suppose it is just the loss of the immortality, he thought. Well, in a way, that is quite a lot to lose."[80] So it is that the Hemingway hero finally "acknowledges and confronts the great, marked event that colored his lifetime . . . and comes to the end of his journey . . . not at the place where he first lived, but where first he died."[81]

There is much of the old familiar pattern in Richard Cantwell. First of all, there is the familiar leg injury (right knee cap) that has plagued so many of the heroes.[82] He is very much alone--in his hotel room or on walks about Venice, alone in his thoughts; alone in the back seat of the car as he tours the countryside and later when he dies. Like the others, he has many memories and much bitterness about the war and what it has done to his life. He tries to keep himself "strictly controlled and unthinking"[83] and puts great emphasis on having a good time: to the chauffeur, Jackson, he says, "I'm tired of seeing you because you worry and you don't have fun";[84] and to Renata: "Let's have a fine time. Let's not think about anything at all."[85]

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[80]Ernest Hemingway, Across the River and into the Trees (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 33.

[81]Young, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[82]Across the River and into the Trees, p. 17.

[83]Ibid., p. 20.

[84]Ibid., p. 58.

[85]Ibid., p. 82.

However, there are some changes which show that though much bitterness remains, many of the psychological wounds associated with the war have healed. For one thing, the colonel can sleep ("as, and when, I need it"),[86] and his dreams, though sometimes strange, are not nightmares.[87] He, like Robert Jordan, has found his "last and true and only love";[88] and he feels that he is lucky to have had so much and that he should never be sad about anything.[89] He also shares Robert Jordan's love of humanity; however, the colonel has restricted his love to only those who had suffered in the war: "He only loved people who had fought or been mutilated."[90] He has also learned that happiness is not a thing to be searched for and found; a man creates happiness out of himself, and when he can do that, happiness becomes "a moveable feast."[91]

Like several of the other heroes, Richard Cantwell is nearing his final meeting with death. However, the challenge that facing death poses for Cantwell differs from that of most Hemingway heroes. His is a deep, inner challenge; death is not being forced upon him violently from outside.

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[86] Ibid., p. 244.

[87] Ibid., p. 121.

[88] Ibid., p. 86.

[89] Ibid., p. 254.

[90] Ibid., p. 71.

[91] Ibid., p. 91.

> An external danger . . . would certainly hold few terrors for Cantwell, a soldier of thirty years' experience. Precisely because of that experience he is less prepared and armed against a softly approaching death. With courage, skill, and a little luck a man may escape a death which threatens him with external violence. But for Cantwell that possibility of escape no longer exists. When the body refuses, even a steady spirit and unbroken courage are of no avail. For Cantwell, life simply comes to an end because his spent organism refuses him further service. His body has become a rebel not subject to any discipline prescribed by the Army manual.[92]

He lives daily with the knowledge that the next heart attack will be fatal.

Like all the other heroes before him, Cantwell has no refuge in prayer or religion. However, Renata procures from him a type of death bed confession to purge his soul of its bitterness and thereby change his inevitable violent death into what she refers to as "a happy death." (Love is again a religion for the Hemingway hero.) Renata knows that what Cantwell needs at the end of his life is purgation; thus, she urges the lonely, embittered man to purge his soul by talking out his bitterness.[93] He is at first reluctant to talk about the war, but gradually the hero who has abstained from thought for so long comes to realize that he must think about it (". . . I will think about it and get rid of it . . .")[94] if he is

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[92]Horst Oppel, "Hemingway's Across the River and into the Trees," reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 218.

[93]In his analysis of Across the River and into the Trees Oppel includes a detailed discussion of the purging process Renata employs to free Cantwell of his bitterness. (pp. 220-222)

[94]Across the River and into the Trees, p. 213.

to receive what he needs most--the inner freedom which will let him die at peace with himself. In the course of this confession Cantwell is able to shed the bitterness he has accumulated in a lifetime.[95]

Thus, from disillusionment (as represented by Nick Adams and Frederic Henry) to almost complete recovery (represented by Colonel Cantwell), the Hemingway heroes have made continuous progress in learning to live with their wounds in a world which they found hostile. They have regained much of what they had lost in ideals and meaning for living and are learning to live life fully so that they will not feel so bitterly about death when it does come--as it surely will.

II. COWARDS

Dramatically contrasting the Hemingway hero is the man in every novel and in almost every story who does not measure up to the code or has no code at all, the man who has not been able to master his fear of death, or the one who has given up to death without a struggle. The man who runs; the one who gives up; the one who behaves rashly or foolishly by code standards--this is the coward, the cobarde, the most despised man in Hemingway's world.

Francis Macomber

What is it like to be a coward? No one knew the answer to that question better than Francis Macomber. When it came to

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[95]Oppel, op. cit., p. 222.

cowardice, he was the champion.

"The next thing he knew he was running; running wildly, in panic in the open, running toward the stream."[96] Francis Macomber "had just shown himself, very publicly, to be a coward."[97] He was apologetic and emotional regarding the lion business: "'I'm sorry,' Macomber said and looked at him with his American face that would stay adolescent until it became middle-aged . . . . 'I bolted like a rabbit.'"[98] "The fear was still there like a cold slimy hollow in all the emptiness where once his confidence had been and it made him feel sick."[99]

> There was no one to tell he was afraid, nor to be afraid with him, and, lying alone, he did not know the Somali proverb that says a brave man is always frightened three times by a lion; when he first sees his track, when he first hears him roar and when he first confronts him.[100]

The worst side of Macomber's poltroonery was his inability to stand up to his wife, who deserves at least part credit for his being so fine a cowardly specimen. Margot Macomber has her husband under her thumb and wants to keep him there. She fears that if Macomber ever becomes strong, he will ditch her--as she deserves. As the situation stands, "Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to

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[96]"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," p. 20.

[97]Ibid., p. 4.

[98]Ibid., p. 7.

[99]Ibid., p. 11.

[100]Ibid.

divorce her and Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him."[101] A stalemate exists between them, each hating the other because of this which keeps them together. At any rate, if Macomber should become "a man," he will no longer be Margot's little puppet; therefore she constantly keeps him whittled down to size with her cutting remarks and needles him with her taunts and icy sarcasm until he is practically at the breaking point.

As if his cowardice were not sickening enough in itself, Macomber's ignorance of the rules of the code makes him even more despicable. He first wants to shoot from the car; then he wants to send in beaters to roust the wounded lion; finally, he suggests just leaving the lion there--not thinking of the animal's potential danger, not to mention its misery, if it should happen to be still alive. Francis Macomber is pathetic!

Cowards in the Arena

Many of Hemingway's works condition a person to associate only bravery with the bull ring. However, in Death in the Afternoon he pointedly unmasks the cowardice that is there, too. And in many instances the characteristics are like those of Francis Macomber: excessive nervousness; inability to hold oneself together; infraction of code rules; a deliberate side-stepping of risk; aloneness; public admission of fear.

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[101] Ibid., p. 22.

Hernandorena. "As he stood up I saw the heavy, soiled gray silk of his rented trousers open cleanly and deeply to show the thigh bone from the hip almost to the knee."[102] Hernandorena had made a simple technical error: he did not keep the red cloth of the muleta between himself and the bull until the charge. He broke a rule; tragedy was the result.

> Then Hernandorena admitted his nervousness. To show his nervousness was not shameful; only to admit it. When, lacking the technique and thereby admitting his inability to control his feet, the matador went down on both knees before the bull the crowd had no more sympathy with him than with a suicide.[103]

Rafael El Gallo. Gallo was "a great bullfighter and the first one to admit fear." For him to be killed in the ring would neither be irony nor tragedy because "there would be no dignity; El Gallo would be too frightened for that."[104] He had never admitted the reality of death and would not even go to the chapel to look at the body of his brother, Joselito, when he was killed in the ring.

Nino de la Palma. Eventually, all matadors are gored "dangerously, painfully and very close to fatally . . . and until a matador has undergone this first severe wound you cannot tell what his permanent value will be."[105]

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[102] Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 108.

[103] Ibid., p. 109. At this point Hemingway's attitude toward suicides is unsympathetic. The suicide as a type of coward is discussed more fully in a later part of this chapter.

[104] Ibid., p. 159.

[105] Ibid., p. 166.

> [Nino de la Palma] was never the same after he found the bulls carried terms in the hospital, inevitable, and death, perhaps, in their horns. . . . Courage comes such a short distance; from the heart to the head; but when it goes no one knows how far away it goes . . . Sometimes you get it back from another wound, the first may bring fear of death and the second may take it away. . . . Bullfighters stay in the business relying on their knowledge and their ability to limit the danger and hope the courage will come back and sometimes it does and most times it does not.[106]

Cowardice born of an agonizing experience, such as the gorings matadors take, can be rationalized to a degree; but there seems little excuse for the sniveling, spineless runt of a man ("runt" referring to character, not size) who cannot manage his own day-to-day existence.

Robert Cohn

The neurotic, fawning, sentimental outsider in The Sun Also Rises is a constant embarrassment to Jake and his friends. Robert Cohn has no understanding whatever of the code. He is an emotional weakling and shows his weakness by the way he "answers all criticism with an uppercut."[107] At one time he had been middleweight champion at Princeton, having learned boxing (which he hated) "painfully and thoroughly" to counteract a huge inferiority complex.[108] He still carries a chip on his shoulder, left over no doubt from the Princeton days. He paints a rather pompous picture of himself, but

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[106] Ibid., p. 222.

[107] Maxwell Geismar, "No Man Alone Now," Virginia Quarterly Review, XVII (October, 1941), p. 527.

[108] The Sun Also Rises, p. 3.

everyone in the novel can see him for the insipid, inferior "has been" that he is; and they respond to him with disgust. Noticeably, he is referred to in the novel quite formally and impersonally by his last name or by both names, whereas more companionable first names are used for the others in Jake's group--thus setting Cohn apart as a misfit, an outsider. Making his status with the group even clearer are the comments his "friends" make about him behind his back: "Was I rude enough to him? . . . I'm so sick of him! . . . He depresses me so." "He doesn't add much to the gayety." "He's behaved very badly."[109] Their remarks to his face are even worse: "Do you think you amount to something, Cohn? Do you think you belong here among us? People who are out to have a good time?" "Do you think Brett wants you here? Do you think you add to the party?" "I'm not clever, but I do know when I'm not wanted. Why don't you see when you're not wanted, Cohn?"[110]

The most unforgivable thing about Cohn was his inability to control his emotions and his making a spectacle of himself over love. He imagines himself in love with Brett Ashley and makes a fool of himself in an affair which offers him nothing in return for his dog-like devotion to this shallow goddess whose emotions, like his character, are only skin deep. Cohn is unable to face up to disappointment of losing Brett. He crumbles up; he can't take it;

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[109] Ibid., p. 181.

[110] Ibid., p. 177.

he cannot cope with life's hard knocks. He is a failure.

The last view of Robert Cohn in the book is a pitiable one: "There was no light in the room. Cohn was lying, face down, on the bed in the dark." "Cohn was crying. There he was, face down on the bed, crying."[111] He tried to apologize to Jake for the mess he had made and the insulting things he had said. "He was crying. His voice was funny. He lay there in his white shirt on the bed in the dark. His polo shirt."[112]

The Wounded Russian

The coward in "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" puts on a disgusting show. He was shot by accident while he was crawling under a table to hide. The gangsters were not even after him. His own cowardice had resulted in one of life's dirty tricks. But rather than taking it on the chin, in true code fashion, the Russian moans and groans louder than anyone else in the hospital.[113]

Sam Cardinella

Sam Cardinella was a coward to the death. He appears only once in a very short scene, but Hemingway's feeling about this man is unmistakable. The scene is a hanging in the county jail corridor. Sam Cardinella had to be carried out and propped in a chair.[114]

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[111] Ibid., p. 113.

[112] Ibid., p. 194.

[113] "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," p. 468.

Hemingway registers only contempt for this man who dies without honor or dignity.

William Campbell

A complete failure in coping with life, Billy Campbell has given up to fate in "A Pursuit Race." As he was supposed to be an "advance man" for a burlesque show, Billy lost his job when the show caught up with him in Kansas City. When the manager of the show came to see Billy, he found him in bed tanked up on alcohol and dope. He just couldn't cope with life any more. He simply couldn't "slide" when the going got rough. Stay away from women, horses, and eagles is his advice to the manager;[115] in other words, stay away from love and gambling and patriotism--with all three you lose.

The really sad thing about Billy Campbell is that he is losing another "pursuit race," too. When we are born, we each begin a pursuit race with death. As long as we stay ahead, things are fine; but when we "get down off our bicycles," death gains ground. Death--psychological death--has already overtaken Billy Campbell. His withdrawal from life is suicide: "I've got down off my bicycle," he says.[116] That bed symbolizes a coffin. Billy Campbell

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[114] "Chapter XV" from In Our Time, p. 219.

[115] "A Pursuit Race," p. 354.

[116] Ibid., p. 351.

is already "dead."

This time there is no contempt in Hemingway's tone--only sadness and compassion and helplessness as Mr. Turner returns only to find Billy sleeping; "and as Mr. Turner was a man who knew what things in life were very valuable he did not wake him."[117]

Ole Andreson

Another coward who has given up the race is the Swede in "The Killers." The man whose cowardice made Nick Adams so sick that he had to "get out of this town" was one degree lower than Billy Campbell. He is lying down on the bed, his face to the wall, as if to add insult to injury. In ballad symbolism "the face to the wall" is a sure sign of impending death. Andreson is already "dead" and he knows it and he is not going to do anything about it. Life and death are the same to him--nada. In fact, his attitude toward dying, leaves the impression that as far as he is concerned death is better than life, that he would actually welcome death because it would put an end to the torture of living.[118]

Pablo

"I am afraid to die, Pilar. Tengo miedo de morir. Dost thou understand?"[119] Those are the words of a ruined man. The full

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[117] Ibid., p. 355.

[118] "The Killers," pp. 287-288.

[119] For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 90.

impact of his words is more clearly understood through Edward Fenimore's suggestion that the Spanish phrase has a starkness lacking in the English equivalent. Tengo inevitably means something more than "have," giving peculiar intensity--"not simply that Pablo 'has' fear of death: he holds it desperately, in his two hands."[120]

Pablo had been brave in the beginning. He had killed many in his early zeal for the cause, and he had put great store in how men met death. He once divulged to Pilar his profound disappointment in the death of the Spanish priest: "He died very badly. He had very little dignity. . . . A Spanish priest should die very well."[121] But somehow, as the war wore on, Pablo had become tired of being hunted. When he was no longer the victor, when he was not the aggressor, he could not stomach death for himself. Furthermore, his acquisition of horses "made him rich and as soon as he was rich he wanted to enjoy life."[122] He became gloomy, moody, and fatalistic: "and what can I look forward to? To be hunted and to die. Nothing more."[123] He became the "Robert Cohn" of the gypsies, who (his own wife included) regarded him with disgust, considered him a threat to the cause, and even plotted to kill him. His wife's words

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[120] Edward Fenimore, "English and Spanish in For Whom the Bell Tolls," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work ed. John K. M. McCaffery (World Publishing Company, 1950), p. 188.

[121] For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 128.

[122] Ibid., p. 16.

[123] Ibid., p. 15.

express the general feeling toward him: "Shut up, coward. Shut up, bad luck bird. Shut up, murderer."[124] Finally, his dastardliness did cause him to betray them by deserting in the night with his horses and the detonators. But finding desertion too lonely to endure, he redeemed himself by coming back and doing his part in the business of the bridge.

Kashkin

In Robert Jordan's eyes an even worse coward than Pablo was Kashkin, the man who had worked previously with the gypsies in an expedition to blow up a train. The gypsies had been aware of Kashkin's weak nature:

> He made us promise to shoot him in case he were wounded at the business of the train and should be unable to get away. . . . He had a prejudice against killing himself. He told me that. Also he had a great fear of being tortured.[125]

In answer to questions about Kashkin's death, Robert Jordan gives three different versions, each one closer to the truth about the real extent of Kashkin's cowardice. To Pablo he said that Kashkin had committed suicide: "He was captured and he killed himself. . . . He was wounded and he did not wish to be a prisoner."[126] To the gypsies in camp he would only disclose that in reality he had shot Kashkin at his request because he was badly wounded.[127] Only

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[124] Ibid., p. 58.

[125] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[126] Ibid., p. 21.

to El Sordo and Pilar did he lay bare the complete and horrible truth: "I shot him. He was too badly wounded to travel and I shot him. . . . He was unwilling to be left behind and I shot him."[128]

Don Faustino Rivero

Of all the cowards in any Hemingway story, his portrait of Don Faustino Rivero is the most unforgettable. Don Faustino was one of the villagers killed in Pablo's "reign of terror" in that little Spanish town. We see him here as it is his turn to walk to his death between the lines formed by the rebels. Don Faustino combed his hair before coming out, then turned quickly and "ducked back toward the entrance of the Ayuntamiento." His style gone, "he came out now with Pablo behind him as though Pablo were cleaning a street and Don Faustino was what he was pushing ahead of him."[129] "No one said anything and no one touched him and, when he was halfway through the lines, he could go no farther and fell to his knees."

> And they walked Don Faustino through the lines, holding him close on either side, holding him up as he walked, with him with his hands over his eyes. But he must have looked through the fingers, because when they came to the edge of the cliff with him, he knelt again, throwing himself down and clutching the ground and holding to the grass, saying, "No. No. No. Please. NO. Please. Please. No. No."

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[127] Ibid., p. 249.

[128] Ibid., p. 149.

[129] Ibid., p. 113.

> Then the peasants who were with him and the others . . . gave him a rushing push and he was over the edge without ever having been beaten and you heard him crying loud and high as he fell.[130]

The Suicide

There is a special place in a number of Hemingway stories for the man Robert Jordan referred to as a cobarde (his being unable to bear saying the word coward in English); the man who Hemingway, knowing that death is a lonely business, once said was almost the loneliest man of all in the matter of dying.[131] Here was a subject that troubled Hemingway deeply: how does one classify the suicide according to the code? Is such a man a coward? The man is different in each of the stories, though frequently a father figure; and there is no doubt that the one man Hemingway had in mind through most of his probing was his own father, Dr. Clarence Hemingway. Hemingway was so shaken by his father's death--particularly by the manner of death--that he could not talk about and did not even want to think about it for some time after it happened. Gradually, he was able to project some of his feelings about his father into his stories.

The first references to suicide are in Hemingway's short stories: the Indian father who slit his throat with a razor while his wife was undergoing surgery without anesthesia in the bunk

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[130] Ibid., p. 114.

[131] Death in the Afternoon, p. 122.

below him; Ole Andreson, who is actually committing suicide by his concession to fate; the old man who sits in the "clean, well-lighted" café had tried to commit suicide the previous week for no apparent reason;[132] Nick Adams says that his father died in a trap that he had helped only a little to set, that they all betrayed him, and recalls that the undertaker had done a handsome job on his father's face.[133] In each of these stories the reaction of the major bystander (usually Nick) varies. On the way home from the Indian Camp, Nick brushed thoughts about death out of his mind, feeling that he (and no doubt his father, too) would never die. A few years later, the sight of Ole Andreson made Nick sick. The old waiter in the café is sympathetic toward the old man, understanding his feelings of emptiness. Nick is definitely disturbed about his father's death, so much so that he has guilt feelings about it and is not able to state aloud what manner of death it was. In another story, as Mr. Harris, he blurts out the truth with cynical bitterness: Mr. Harris, speaking of his father, says to the man who has joined him at the table,

> "I'm sure he would have liked to meet you, but he died last year. Shot himself, oddly enough."
>
> "I am very truly sorry," the man responds. "I am sure his loss was a blow to science as to his family."
>
> "Science took it awfully well."[134]

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[132] "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," p. 379.

[133] "Fathers and Sons," pp. 489, 491.

[134] "Homage to Switzerland," p. 434.

Other minor references to suicide are scattered through his works, but it is in For Whom the Bell Tolls that Hemingway was finally able to release through Robert Jordan most of his pent-up feelings about his father's death.

> I'll never forget how sick it made me the first time I knew he was a cobarde. Go on, say it in English, coward. . . . He was just a coward and that was the worst luck any man could have. Because if he wasn't a coward he would have stood up to that woman and not let her bully him.[135]

Robert Jordan had been so deeply disturbed (bewildered and embarrassed) by his father's suicide that he had practically renounced kinship with him. He had wanted no more to do with his father--his belongings or his memory:

> Remember Grandfather's Smith and Wesson . . . [Jordan is talking to himself]. You asked Grandfather once if he had ever killed any one with it and he said, "Yes." But questioned further he said "I do not care to speak about it, Robert."
>
> Then after your father had shot himself with this pistol, and you had come home from school and they'd had the funeral, the coroner had returned it after the inquest saying, "Bob, I guess you might want to keep the gun. I'm supposed to hold it, but I know your dad set a lot of store by it because his dad packed it all through the War. . . .[136]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> [The next day he took the gun and rode to the high country to] the lake which was supposed to be eight hundred feet deep. . . . he climbed out on a rock and leaned over and saw his face in the still water, and saw himself holding the gun, and then he dropped it, holding it by the muzzle, and saw it go down making bubbles until it was just as big as a watch charm in that clear water, and then it was out of sight.[137]

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[135] For Whom the Bell Tolls, pp. 338-339.

[136] Ibid., pp. 336-337.

[137] Ibid., p. 337.

Even in his thoughts Jordan cannot bear to use his father's name and calls him "that other one that misused the gun."[138] He identifies with his grandfather and hopes that he has inherited some of the grandparent's courage that had obviously bypassed the father.

In spite of the bitterness, there are scenes in which Jordan shows some measure of sympathy and understanding toward his father; and ironically, Jordan himself considers suicide in a moment of stress at the end of the novel--not as an easy way out exactly, but as a necessity to avoid being captured and interrogated. His code would not at that time permit that he carry out such plans; but the fact that he seriously considered them at least raises the possibility in Hemingway's mind that there might be circumstances when taking one's life is not altogether an act of cowardice--it might be a matter of dignity or a necessity requiring great courage for the protection of others.

III. HEROES OF THE CODE

Here, then, in review are Hemingway's recurrent figures:

> literary expatriates in the wastes of nada; bullfighters who have lost their nerve and skill; rich young men without purpose; wounded soldiers who would sign "a separate peace" in order to escape the world's battles; distrought young women grasping at physical sensation as if it were a mode of salvation; tired gangsters; homeless cafe-sitters; stricken Spaniards--men and women always on the margin, barely able to get by from day to day.[139]

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[138] Ibid., p. 338.

[139] Irving Howe, "In Search of a Moral Style," New Republic (September 25, 1961), p. 21.

There emerges from this gallery of figures, "a consistent character" who has mastered the code and is thereby an example to the others. This character is not Hemingway in disguise ("the Hemingway hero is that to some extent"); "he is sharply distinguished from the hero, for he comes to balance the hero's deficiencies, to correct his stance."[140]

> . . . the "code hero" . . . represents a code, according to which the hero, if he could attain it, would be able to live properly in the world of violence, disorder, and misery to which he has been introduced and which he inhabits. The code hero, then, offers up and exemplifies certain principles of honor, courage, and endurance which in a life of tension and pain make a man a man, as we say, and enable him to conduct himself well in the losing battle that is life. He shows, in the author's famous phrase for it, "grace under pressure."[141]

In all code heroes one can detect many of the same characteristics which belong to the hero: wounds, aloneness, no luck, subjection to life's dirty tricks, unfortunate love, awareness of death's constant proximity. But the code hero has learned how through self-discipline to cope with his problems, to suffer with dignity, to go down gracefully, to maintain an undefeated spirit even in the face of destruction. The code hero comes to show the lost generation how to adjust to the wound, the break with society, how to put meaning back into existence and to restore some measure of a man's dignity and decency.

It was the concept of the matador that first caught the

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[140] Young, op. cit., p. 7.

[141] Ibid., p. 8.

admiration of the lost generation: the dignity, courage, discipline, and honor of the fighter.[142] The bullfighter does indeed illustrate the code well:

> As he acts out the role as high priest of a ceremonial in which men pit themselves against violent death, and, with a behavior that formalizes the code, administers what men seek to avoid, he is the very personification of "grace under pressure."[143]

Pedro Romero, "Grace under Pressure"

Perhaps the most notable of the young bullfighters and early code heroes was Romero, the star of The Sun Also Rises. In his skillful managing of himself in the bull ring--his self-discipline, his control of death--he epitomized what Jake was trying to achieve. He is the unspoiled primitive whose simple, well-ordered existence is a sharp contrast to the chaotic lives of Jake's clan. Romero, unlike the others, isn't groping for something to live by. He has found life by facing death daily without fear in the ring. His ideals and his ability to live by his code place him so far above the others that even Brett must admire his integrity (and she salvages a scrap of integrity for herself in her decision to leave him unspoiled). Jake's descriptions of Romero at various places in the novel illustrate the admiration the lost generation felt for this young hero:

> The boy was nineteen years old, alone except for his sword-handler, and three hangers-on, and the bull-fight was to

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[142] Geismar, op. cit., p. 521.

[143] Young, op. cit., p. 14.

> commence in twenty minutes. We wished him "mucha suerte," shook hands, and went out. He was standing, straight and handsome and altogether by himself, alone in the room with the hangers-on as we shut the door.[144]
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time. He did not have to emphasize their closeness. . . . Romero had the old thing, the holding of his purity of line through the maximum of exposure, while he prepared him the bull for the killing.[145]

There was nothing conceited or braggartly about Romero. He always did "smoothly, calmly, and beautifully" what other bullfighters could only bring themselves to do sometimes.[146]

> During Romero's first bull his hurt face had been very noticeable. . . . The fight with Cohn had not touched his spirit but his face had been smashed and his body hurt. He was wiping all that out now. Each thing that he did with this bull wiped that out a little cleaner.[147]

Pedro Romero had real greatness.[148] His was not "brilliant bull-fighting. It was only perfect bull-fighting."[149]

Cayetano Ruiz, A History of Bad Breaks

Cayetano Ruiz is another young hero who lives successfully by his code. Wounded critically, he never complains: his intense suffering is borne in complete silence. He insists that his being

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[144] The Sun Also Rises, p. 163.

[145] Ibid., p. 168.

[146] Ibid., p. 215.

[147] Ibid., p. 219.

[148] Ibid., p. 216.

[149] Ibid., p. 217.

shot was an accident, and he either cannot or will not give police any information about who shot him. Even when the odor of death is about him, he remains smiling. He is alone; he has no friends. He has had a history of bad luck and close calls with death: he suffered a broken back when he was a rodeo rider; as a carpenter, he broke his ankles and wrists; when he was sixteen, he broke his leg and (as if that alone were not bad enough) it had to be reset. Yet, always he has managed to survive, to cheat death. And he does so again. This chipper young Mexican will recover from the abdominal wounds, but he will be paralyzed.

Throughout all of this experience, he is a foil to the sniveling Russian, who moans loudly over his inconsequential hurt, and to Mr. Frazer, who, along with the rest of his generation, must have his various opiums to survive. Cayetano needs no opiate but his own courage, self-discipline, and will power.[150]

Jesus Christ, The Code Hero's Hero

Hemingway admired another young hero, this time a Jew, who showed tremendous "grace under pressure." In the story "Today Is Friday" three Roman soldiers are in a drinking place (no doubt clean and well-lighted) after the crucifixion. One is obviously much impressed by the way Christ died, for he remarks six times to the other two men, "He looked pretty good to me in there today."[151]

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[150] "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," pp. 468-487.

[151] "Today Is Friday," p. 359.

Unusual that a generation that had lost its religious faith should find so much to admire in this particular man; yet, he typifies their code to the letter: a man alone; wounded (hands and side); self-disciplined, never makes a complaint, suffers in silence; unselfish; he, too, was called expatriate; a rebel against existing authority and rules of conduct, he made his own code; his interest in and love of humanity (particularly those who knew suffering and pain); he spoke often of "the good life." He represents everything the lost generation lacked--particularly peace of mind, the courage to die well, and the promise of immortality beyond death. But such a disillusioned generation could only admire; they were not yet ready to believe. (Echoes of this story are prominent in The Old Man and the Sea. This man had already proved what Santiago sets out to prove: that a man may be destroyed [physically] but not defeated [spiritually].)

Robert Wilson, Lion of the Code

The hunting guide in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is a foil to the craven Francis. He, like all code heroes, is everything the hero wants to be. Furthermore, Robert Wilson is able to help a coward become a hero by teaching him the secret of the code.

It is how one plays the game of life and death that matters. Life for the Hemingway hero is summed up in a quotation from Shakespeare which represents Robert Wilson's secret for bravery.

when he said:

> "I'm really not afraid of them now. After all, what can they do to you?"
>
> "That's it," said Wilson. "Worst one can do is kill you. How does it go? Shakespeare. 'By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next.'"[152]

Wilson was suddenly embarrassed to have brought out this thing that he lived by, but "he had seen men come of age before and it always moved him. It was not a matter of their twenty-first birthday." For the Hemingway hero, the first step in bravery is the acceptance of the fact that death is inevitable and that "it will come when it will come." The point is to meet death on equal ground, look it squarely in the eye, and be prepared to die well. Through Robert Wilson's careful tutelage, Francis Macomber "came of age" and knew, for the first time in his life, "a feeling of definite elation,"[153] "a wild unreasonable happiness that he had never known before,"[154] the feeling that he would never be afraid of anything again.

Robert Wilson stood back to view his pupil with pride: "Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main thing a man had. Made him into a man. Women knew it too. No bloody fear."[155] In Hemingway's terms man only really lives as he

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[152]"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," p. 32.

[153]Ibid., p. 31.

[154]Ibid., p. 32.

[155]Ibid., p. 33.

gains courage to look death unflinchingly in the face. Life in its purest, simplest form gains intensity, has more real significance, more meaning, when placed opposite death; because it is only in defeating death that man lives. We defeat death every day, else we die. Hemingway's heroes often court death, challenge death to a duel in the afternoon; and the highest sense of elation, real living, comes from winning the contest, emerging the victor, undefeated. As long as man has courage, he cannot be defeated by death--destroyed, perhaps, but not defeated. And so it happens with Francis Macomber. The gun-shot destroys him, but he won his private fight against fear of dying. He dies undefeated.

Harry Morgan, No Man Alone Now

Being unable to support his family by honest means, Harry Morgan is forced to smuggle rum and people into the United States from Cuba during the depression-prohibition era. Eventually, he is killed, but "before he dies he has learned the lesson that Hemingway himself must recently have learned: alone, a man has no chance."[156]

> Harry Morgan, the tough guy on his own, . . . presents as hard a surface . . . as any of Hemingway's gangster killers, but honesty, straightness, and courage lie underneath. He is the man-against-the-world, the heroic individual, like the Garcias and Romeros in the daily risking of his life, the pitting of his wits against circumstance; like Lt. Henry in that he stands alone, fighting only for himself and his own but unlike Henry in that his mood is not passive isolation but struggle.[157]

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[156]Young, op. cit., p. 15.

Though Harry is a rogue, it is to his credit that he does not always carry out the illegal missions, but double-crosses the crooks, thereby maintaining a crude sort of decency. Also to his credit, Harry, unlike the aimless upper class, does have a purpose in life. He tells himself that he is doing these shady deals for Marie and the girls, to keep food in the house, because in the rotten world the filthy rich won't give the little guy a chance to make an honest living. He has been driven to the kind of life he leads by the society in which he lives, and he commits himself to crime reluctantly; but society gives him no other choice. A man alone doesn't stand a chance for decency or success. All Harry Morgan can hope to do as he lies there on the cold, rolling deck--painfully and fatally wounded--is to "take it" and die well.[158]

Harry Morgan is a code hero in that he remains undefeated even in the face of death because he is not broken. His dying message to the lost generation: "For the good, the gentle and the brave . . . if they do not try to stand alone and make a separate peace, defeat is not inevitable."[159]

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[157]Edgar Johnson, "Farewell the Separate Peace," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Works, ed. McCaffery, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

[158]Ernest Hemingway, To Have and Have Not (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. 180-181.

[159]Johnson, op. cit., p. 125.

Anselmo, An Old Man Without Fear

> "I am an old man who is afraid of no one," Anselmo told him. . . . "I am an old man who will live until I die."[160]

Anselmo had known great sorrow (his wife had died before the revolution started) and now he knew great loneliness. He spoke often to himself of this loneliness: "I am lonely in the day when I am not working but when dark comes it is a time of great loneliness." "The coming of the dark always made him feel lonely and tonight there was a hollowness in him as if of hunger."[161] His feeling of loneliness was made more acute by the loss of faith he had suffered in the war:

> In the old days he could help this loneliness by the saying of prayers. . . . But he had not prayed once since the movement. He missed the prayers but he thought it would be unfair and hypocritical to say them and he did not wish to ask any favors or for any different treatment than all the men were receiving.[162]

Anselmo was a good man, deeply concerned for humanity; he was much troubled about the business of killing that must go on in a war. He was a man with a conscience.

> I hope I am not for the killing . . . . I think that after the war there will have to be some great penance done for the killing. If we no longer have religion after the war then I think there must be some form of civic penance organized that all may be cleansed from the killing or else we will never have a true and human basis for living.[163]

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[160] For Whom the Bell Tolls, p. 16.

[161] Ibid., p. 197.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid., p. 196.

In spite of his feelings of guilt about the killing, Anselmo was a brave man devoted to a cause as is noted particularly when he lashed out at Pablo's cowardice, for putting his "fox-hole before the interests of humanity. Before the interests of thy people."[164] The revolution, the cause, became Anselmo's religion; and his devotion to it became his code:

> . . . one thing I have that no man nor any God can take from me . . . is that I have worked well for the Republic. I have worked hard for the good that we will all share later. I have worked my best . . . and I have done nothing that I am ashamed of.[165]

He was not afraid to die; he had lived a good life. In the end his life was a sacrifice that others might live; he died for the cause he believed in.

Anselmo, code hero, taught Hemingway hero Robert Jordan much about courage and code behavior; but even more important, he taught him about love for humanity, for all men, whether friend or foe. And Robert Jordan summed up his deep admiration for this old one in simple but moving words (recalling Antony's tribute to Brutus): "Anselmo's a man."[166]

El Sordo, Reluctant Hero

Trapped on a hill, wounded and in much pain, and certain of

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[164] Ibid., p. 11.

[165] Ibid., p. 197.

[166] Ibid., p. 16.

death, another code hero in For Whom the Bell Tolls, manages to approach death with admirable behavior. El Sordo recalls an old Spanish joke: "You will have to take death as an aspirin."[167] In the manner of his courageous last stand against impossible odds, he found something better than aspirin--his own courage. El Sordo continued fighting to the end in the face of bad luck--outrageous luck to be trapped on a hill!

> His head hurt very much and his arm was stiffening so that the pain of moving it was almost unbearable. He looked up at the bright, high blue early summer sky as he raised the leather wine bottle with his good arm. He was fifty-two years old and he was sure this was the last time he would see that sky.
>
> He was not at all afraid of dying but he was angry at being trapped on this hill which was only utilizable as a place to die. . . . Whether one has fear of it or not, one's death is difficult to accept. Sordo had accepted it but there was no sweetness in its acceptance even at fifty-two, with three wounds and him surrounded on a hill.
>
> . . . If one must die, he thought, and clearly one must, I can die. But I hate it.
>
> Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it nor fear of it in his mind. But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond.[168]

Even as death approached, El Sordo's thoughts were on living; even in the face of dying, this code hero was not preoccupied with death. He had always had a healthy, optimistic obsession with living; and

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[167] Ibid., p. 308.

[168] Ibid., pp. 312-313.

even as he died, he went down fighting to preserve the life he loved. Because of this attitude, El Sordo was actually "alive in the midst of death."[169] He died on the hill, but his spirit was never broken.

Manuel Garcia, Maera; The Undefeated

The code heroes have been growing older. From young Romero we come now to his aging counterpart, another champion of the ring. Manuel Garcia, Maera, is featured in several of Hemingway's works. This, more or less, biographical sketch of him is given in Death in the Afternoon: As a fighter, Maera "gave emotion always, and, finally, as he steadily improved his style, he was an artist."[170] But it was quite evident all the last year that he fought that he was going to die from tuberculosis. "I thought that year he hoped for death in the ring, but he would not cheat by looking for it."[171] "I never saw a man to whom time seemed so short as it did to him that season."[172] He died that winter of pneumonia "that had come to finish off the tuberculosis." Delirious, he "rolled under the bed and fought with death under the bed dying as hard as a man can die."[173]

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[169] Ivan Kashkeen, "Alive in the Midst of Death: Ernest Hemingway," reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Baker, op. cit., p. 169.

[170] Death in the Afternoon, p. 79.

[171] Ibid., p. 82.

[172] Ibid., p. 79.

[173] Ibid., p. 82.

He appears to have been Hemingway's kind of person, judging from this description:

> . . . generous, humorous, proud, bitter, foulmouthed and a great drinker. He neither sucked after intellectuals nor married for money. He loved to kill bulls and lived with much passion and enjoyment although the last six months of his life he was very bitter. He knew he had tuberculosis and took absolutely no care of himself; having no fear of death he preferred to burn out, not as an act of bravado, but from choice.[174]

In "The Undefeated" the facts of Maera's life are fictionalized so that he dies in the ring, but he emerges in fiction as in life as a true hero of the code. In this story Manuel Garcia has had a run of bad luck, but now, in his old age, is determined to make a comeback. His old friend Zurito, knowing how much this comeback means to an old champion but also knowing the danger, bargains that he will be picador if Maera will give up the ring after this fight. Ironically, this will be Maera's last fight.

In the ring his bad luck continues. The bulls in the night fights are inferior, and Maera draws a particularly tough one, a poor fighter and difficult to work. Even though unlucky in getting a difficult bull, Maera shows all the style of true code behavior. He is alone; he thinks methodically, one thing at a time. In fact, he does not have to think--his eye sees; his body does.

In the stands a young, cold, unimpassioned reporter has stopped writing. He sees the bullfighters as a "bunch of kids and

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[174] Ibid., pp. 82-83. Ironically, Hemingway could have been describing himself twenty-five or so years later.

bums";[175] he is completely unaware of the underlying drama being played out before him: this is no merely routine fight; a man's honor, his dignity, his purpose in living are riding on the outcome of this fight; there is nothing else left for an old man alone. But the reporter is unmoved by the old man's struggle for "life."[176]

The fight continues; the luck grows worse. Manuel charges for the kill; he is thrown. He is up and after the bull again. He gets another sword, but again the sword will not go in: "He's all bone."[177] Again the sword will not go in; it buckles and goes high into the crowd. The angry spectators begin to throw things into the ring. Maera tries again; but luck is still against him; and as he jumps back, he trips on a cushion (another of life's dirty tricks.) The horn goes into his side. He is thrown. But--and here is the great lesson this code hero presents--he is up again, determined. After four unsuccessful tries and now with a painful wound, the old man refuses to admit defeat. Holding himself together, he tries again. And this time he succeeds! He felt tired. His whole chest felt scalding inside. On the operating table as the story closes, Manuel is still undefeated. He will not accept the fact that he is old and that he is going to die.

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[175] "The Undefeated," p. 256.

[176] The same mood is present in "Banal Story," in which another young man (or possibly this same reporter), obsessed with his own romantic notions about life, is unaware of the real implications in the death of Maera.

[177] "The Undefeated," p. 263.

A quotation from "Banal Story" closes the section on Manuel Garcia, Maera. Much like the comment Jake made about Romero, this statement must summarize the quality of character that draws such admiration for all code heroes from the people in Hemingway's world: "Bull-fighters were very relieved he was dead, because he did always in the bull-ring the things they could only do sometimes."[178]

Jack Brennan, Loser and Still Champion

The ring changes from a bull ring to a boxing ring, but the code hero is the same. Only a change of costume is needed to transform Manuel Garcia, champion of the muleta, into Jack Brennan, champion of the gloves. They share much in common: age, bad luck, determination, and "cojones" ("nerve," in Hemingway language, "guts").

Jack Brennan, welterweight champion, is being paid to throw the fight to Walcott. Furthermore, he is betting fifty grand on Walcott at two to one to make one last fortune as he bows out of the ring. Jack is not in shape for the fight, and he knows he cannot possibly win; thus, he reasons that it would be smart to make a profit when he is sure to lose anyway. Nonetheless, he can't sleep for worrying about it. He tries to tell his conscience that it is only business, but he knows--and we know--that he is selling his integrity for fifty grand.

The match is in the eleventh round, and just as he had

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[178]"Banal Story," p. 361.

expected, Jack knows that he cannot possibly win; however, he is confident of staying in until the agreed-upon round; he can hold out until then; his money is safe. All he wants now is to "finish it off right to please himself."[179] He does not want to be knocked out: his pride and his integrity could not stand that.

In the next round, however, exposing an obviously planned double cross by the gamblers, Walcott lands Jack an illegal blow below the belt. If Jack goes down, the money goes; if the referee calls "foul," the money goes. Thus, Jack, holding himself together in true code hero style, insists that it was an accident. He then sets in on Walcott, giving him a terrific return blow--below the belt, so obviously and wickedly intentional that the referee has no choice but to declare Walcott winner on a foul.

Jack Brennan got his money, and through sheer will power, he did indeed "finish it off to please himself." He saved that much of his integrity at least. He threw the match, but on his own terms. He lost, but in the manner of his losing, he won!

Santiago, The Big Fisherman

With The Old Man and The Sea the theme introduced with Maera and Jack Brennan continues: a man may be destroyed, but not defeated. Like many of the other heroes and code heroes, Santiago has had a history of hard knocks and no luck. He is an old man alone, with

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[179]"Fifty Grand," p. 323.

only his memories of happier days (his dreams of lion cubs and peaceful African shores) to give him comfort. When the story opens, he has been eighty-four days without a fish; still he does not give up. Venturing out alone and beyond the bounds of safety, he challenges the big one, refusing to admit that age and luck are against him--that he hasn't got a chance. He hooks a giant marlin and for two days and nights he gallantly holds on while he is towed farther out to sea. Finally bringing the fish alongside, he lashes it to the skiff. But almost at once the sharks begin to take his prize. He kills them until he has nothing left to fight with. "Then they eat all but the skeleton, and he tows that home, half dead with exhaustion, and makes his way to bed to sleep and dream of other days."[180]

Santiago lost the battle with the sharks when they came to take his fish, but in the manner of his losing, he won. He fought bravely and persistently, just as the marlin had fought him, refusing to accept defeat as inevitable. Santiago proved that though a man may grow old and be wholly down on his luck, though destruction seems inevitable, he can still dare, he can stick to the rules, he can persist, and in the manner of his losing, he can win the victory.

There are definite religious overtones in this last code hero story, indicating that perhaps religiousness is finally

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[180]Young, op. cit., p. 19.

returning to the lost generation along with the return of faith in love and in patriotic ideals. The blame for man's defeat is no longer placed on God (who permits such horrible things to happen) but on man who must take the responsibility for his own actions. Man brings defeat upon himself when he breaks the rules, when he goes out too far. Man is not a pawn in the hands of an angry God who enjoys making him suffer. Rather, man has been given life and has been placed in a world where survival is hard and where the responsibility for what a man makes of his life rests squarely on his shoulders. And through his suffering, he obtains life and salvation. He gains dignity through suffering. Dignity gained through suffering--to that extent The Old Man and the Sea is "something like a Greek tragedy, in that as the hero fails, the audience may get a memorable glimpse of what stature a man may have."[181]

The deep wounds of World War I are becoming possible to live with. They will always be there for the lost generation; but in finding an approach to dying, the heroes have been able to "live" again. "I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted was to know how to live in it." As Nick Adams, the hero began to realize that learning to live by the rules was an essential part of "learning to live in it." The "Big Two-Hearted River" stories stress the importance of staying in bounds, not to go out too far;

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[181] Ibid., p. 20.

to hook trout in deep places makes it impossible to land them. There is a definite echo of these words in The Old Man and the Sea. In that story "Nick" is older; the fish is larger; the river is an ocean--but Hemingway almost comes full circle in theme, with things on a larger scale and deeper in meaning. The river is life; the ocean is life. If a man wants to take things from life (the trout, the marlin--opportunity, success, health, happiness, life itself), he must go by the rules. There is always the threat of death (the swamp, the sharks); and if the man breaks the rules or goes beyond the safety mark, he may experience disillusionment, disappointment, possibly death itself (the trout gets away; the marlin is destroyed). But unless he dares to venture out, to challenge death, a man has no life. Life has no meaning when viewed from the "safety" of a front porch. To live life at all, one must risk death. The shattered heroes of World War I had to learn how to live again by learning how to die. And it doesn't matter how often he has proved himself before, a man must continue to justify his existence, else he dies. Nick's searching soul seems to find the answer to his need as Santiago tells the parable of his battle first with the marlin, then with the sharks.

"This, to epitomize the message the code hero always brings, is life: you lose, of course; what counts is how you conduct yourself while you are being destroyed."[182]

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[182] Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER VII

HEMINGWAY, THE UNDEFEATED

> Since he was a young boy, he has cared greatly for fishing and shooting. If he had not spent so much time at them . . . he might have written much more. On the other hand he might have shot himself.[1]

"On his old dependable typewriter, the author had created hundreds of unforgettable characters, but the greatest of all was Hemingway under other names and guises."[2] "If on closing Hemingway's books you recall and assort the disjointed pieces of the biography of his main hero, you will be able to trace the decisive points of his life."[3]

Hemingway does indeed tell his intimate life story in his works. By following the chronology of his heroes and their attitudes about life and death, one concludes with an accurate, intimate look into the mind and soul of one man, not several. As he struggles with his heroes to understand life and to find himself, as he achieves in his code heroes a kind of philosophy he can live by--and die by--Hemingway emerges from his own works as the true

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[1]Ernest Hemingway, writing about himself in Portrait and Self Portraits by George Schreiber (1936), cited by Alfred G. Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man (New York: Lancer Books, Inc., 1961), p. 13.

[2]Kurt Singer, Hemingway: Life and Death of a Giant (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1961), p. 208.

[3]J. Kashkeen, "Ernest Hemingway: A Tragedy of Craftsmanship," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Works, ed. John K. M. McCaffery (New York: World Publishing Company, 1950), p. 72.

protagonist to be found there.

As Nick Adams, Hemingway was shocked and stunned by the corruption and violence in the world around him and concluded at a young age that "in life one must be hard, that only the tough-skinned survive."[4] But though exposed to violence, pain, and death, "he felt sure that he would never die." He was frustrated by his parents' incompatibility and disillusioned because his father would not assert his authority in their home: "If he wasn't a coward, he would have stood up to that woman and not let her bully him," he was later to say in another hero's guise, but with Nick Adams' soul. Meanwhile, he experienced his own disenchantments with adolescent love. A "loner" in school (admired but not socially well-liked), he felt the need of boxing lessons, already finding the world a hostile place. His convictions were further confirmed when from time to time he ventured outside of Oak Park alone, "coming face to face with violence and evil 'on the road.'"[5] Exposure to gangsters, crazy ex-prizefighters, dope addicts, threats, fights, murders, suicides, homosexuality, prostitution left its mark on his attitude. If this was life, how did one learn to survive in it? What are the frustrations that drive people to the brink of perversion and self-destruction? It was probably in an effort to answer these questions

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[4]André Maurois, "Ernest Hemingway," Revue de Paris, LXII (March, 1955), reprinted in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), p. 39.

[5]Ibid.

that Hemingway became so obsessed with his coverage of violence while working with the Star in Kansas City.

But Hemingway suffered his greatest trauma, as did Lt. Henry and Nick, at Fossalta, when he lost his illusion of immortality and made his separate peace with the enemy. Love, religion, patriotic ideals, life itself had betrayed Hemingway (or so he felt) just as they had played false with the characters in his books. He came home from the war as Harold Krebs--restless, despondent, unsettled, nervous, wanting to keep life simple and free of entanglements that could trap or hurt. He experienced the same fears and frustrations that came to all his heroes: the insomnia; the fear of dying in the dark; the confusion which required clean, well-ordered, well-lighted places to sort itself out; the loneliness; the nightmares; the desire to numb his mind to thought and his body to pain; the fear that his own courage would fail him if he had to face death again; the emptiness, the nada that life had suddenly become.

"That first summer after the experience of being alone and near death was a time of personal triumph and humiliation, one of violent emotion." Hemingway felt that "he had lived more deeply than his fellow men. He was moody and bored, and he had not yet decided what to do about it."[6] As Nick Adams, he left "soldier's home" and went again to the Michigan woods to find peace and pull himself together. (Ever after the war Hemingway [and his heroes]

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[6]Leicester Hemingway, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1963), p. 52.

was continually searching for "the good place," "the good place to camp"--the peaceful place of rest and quiet, removed from violence and fear--such as Nick found beside the Big Two-Hearted River. Even so, he [as they] was constantly drawn into the world of violence and danger by a compelling need to test and reaffirm the courage that he feared he had lost in the war.) Up in Michigan Hemingway concluded that his separate peace with the enemy would best be extended to a break with society, at least with American small-town society. Coming home had not been any good; coming home to America had not been any good. He had left part of himself in Europe (the only part that mattered--his courage), and he would have to go back there to try at least to find it again.

The effect of seeing more war so soon after the war he had just "died" in was not altogether bad. In reporting the Turkish-Greek conflict, he began trying to analyze exactly what it is that war does to people, to write down his observations in scenes that pictured the blood bath, the inferno, that is the battlefront and the specters of death and disillusionment that linger after the war is over to haunt the shell-shocked soul who had survived only to face a "living death" in a world void of love, ideals, or religious faith. Here was a story worth telling, a story that needed telling to present the truth about war and the havoc it creates in people's lives.

Having become interested in this story to tell, Hemingway abandoned journalism and established himself as a writer. The

subject he set out to cover (and the one he could never afterward abandon) was death. Being a beginning writer and wanting to begin with simple subjects and the simplest subject of all being violent death and the war being over and the only other place where one could study violent death being the bullfighting arena--Hemingway headed for Spain.

He wrote of his experiences there first as Jake Barnes in The Sun Also Rises and then as himself in Death in the Afternoon. As Jake, he lived the true expatriate's life--drinking, fishing, joking with companions, enjoying freedom from responsibilities, complications, and consequences. As himself, he continued the "holiday spirit" with light, often frivolous, tête-à-têtes with a little old lady tourist who grew tired of hearing so much talk about the dead, not realizing, until Hemingway pointed it out, that "the dead are tired, too."[7] All the while, Hemingway (Jake) was trying to learn how to live with his physical and mental wounds; to establish a new code of conduct that would restore the dignity and honor lost in the war; to restore confidence in his own courage (in his ability to face death); and to regain, if only for a moment, that illusion of immortality by observing the magnificent, proud matadors who daily challenge death to a duel in the sun. And while achieving all of this, Hemingway was able at the same time to give the world its best portrait of the lost generation and its most knowledgeable

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[7]Ernest Hemingway, Death in the Afternoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 179.

reference book on bullfighting.

Before these books were published, however, Hemingway wrote a number of short stories, filled with horror and violence. His first major volume, In Our Time (ironically suggesting the quotation from the Common Prayer Book, "Give us peace in our time, O Lord"), "was a silent protest against violence; at the same time a masochist's delight in describing that violence; and a liberation from it." It was as if Hemingway "wanted to purge himself of violence by expressing it" (as Colonel Cantwell would do in a much later book). Hemingway, in fact, once named as his "psychoanalyst" his portable Corona typewriter.[8]

Next to his nearly being killed in the war, the most soul-searing injury Hemingway sustained was the shattering blow of his father's suicide. He had loved his father and wanted to admire him, but this inexcusable way of dying had confirmed Nick Adams' suspicions that his father was a coward. There had been other times when his father had lost face by backing down from a fight or from an argument with his wife, but this last was too much. It made Hemingway sick, and for a long time he could not bring himself to talk about it or write about it in his books. He requested that he be sent the gun his father had used; but, as Robert Jordan, he later revealed that he really had felt like throwing it into the deepest lake in Michigan. The bitterness Hemingway felt about his

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[8]Maurois, op. cit., pp. 41, 43.

father's death lasted through many stories, but as time wore on and Hemingway grew older, this wound, too, began to heal and something akin to understanding began to replace the resentment.

In a late Nick Adams story Hemingway disclosed that he thought his father was not alone to blame for what happened to him: "He had died in a trap that he helped only a little to set."[9] As Robert Jordan, he said that he understood his father's action, though he did not approve of it; and he felt that one would have to be "awfully occupied" with himself "to do a thing like that."[10] In the same book sympathy for his father showed in a quiet moment when Pilar had asked Jordan if his father shot himself to avoid being tortured. His reply was, "Yes. To avoid being tortured," repeating the phrase as if he had not thought of his father's death in quite that light before.[11] Then, in the closing moments of the book, Jordan himself strongly considered suicide, not necessarily as an easy way out (though that thought was subconsciously present), but to avoid being tortured and questioned, whereby he might be forced to reveal information that would be damaging to the others who had escaped. He made another perceptive comment: "Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you."[12]

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[9]"Fathers and Sons," pp. 489-490.

[10]Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 338.

[11]Ibid., pp. 66-67.

[12]Ibid., p. 468.

Though Jordan had no pain at that point, it is noteworthy that he should understand the humiliation of suffering. In Hemingway's world, where to die well is the only measure of a man's life, there is no room for humiliation. Better that a man die with dignity, before the pain comes. However, Hemingway would not permit his hero to take his own life at that point, but he was beginning to allow that there might be situations when suicide would be an appropriate and unselfish ending to a man's life.

It is important to note that thus far, though Hemingway had witnessed all kinds of violent death and suicides by people who just could not take it any more, there was one particular torture he had not yet experienced for himself--the agony and humiliation of a slow death from a failing body. This was the torment that had prompted (at least in part) Dr. Clarence Hemingway's death; but there was no way that his son could at this time understand that particular kind of torture, for though he had lost his illusion of immortality, Ernest Hemingway tenaciously held on to his illusion of immortal youth. At thirty-five, giving chase to kudu and buffalo in the African wilds, the old "lion" knew that he would never wear out.

Hemingway's study of death continued in Africa. He gave an intimate portrait of himself on this "death safari" in Green Hills of Africa, an autobiographical treatise on wild game hunting. In this work, the author emerged from behind his disguise as Nick or Henry or Jordan and showed himself to be a hero of the code.

Some of the basic ideas Hemingway had thus far formulated about life and death were reinforced in this book. It is how one plays the game of life that counts: "I did not mind killing anything, any animal, if I killed it cleanly . . . ."[13] "But it was excited shooting, all of it and I was not proud of it. I had gotten excited and shot at the whole animal instead of the right place and I was ashamed."[14] ". . . I . . . shot at the whole animal instead of calling the shot. It was my own lousy fault. . . . It came from over-confidence in being able to do a thing and then omitting one of the steps in how it is done."[15] Throughout the book, the true thrill and pleasure of the hunt came primarily from the ability to hunt by the rules: (1) kill clean, (2) don't spook the animals, (3) have ability to track well, (4) remain calm under pressure, (5) show perseverance and courage in the hunt.

In this book, as in his fiction and in life, Hemingway held admiration for those who play the game well (by the code) and contempt for those who do not. Karl did not shoot clean and was too much "the nice guy" (but, to Hemingway's chagrin, he always got the largest animal). Garrick was a "Robert Cohn"--theatrical, artificial, showy; he spooked the animals, pretended more knowledge

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[13]Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 272.

[14]Ibid., p. 259.

[15]Ibid., p. 272.

than he had, and lacked perseverance (he gave up on tracking the sable). M'Cola was regarded with contempt for a brief period when he failed to clean a wet rifle and the barrel rusted; however, he regained Hemingway's respect in later hunts, particularly the sable hunt on which he saw "M'Cola tracking slowly, steadily, and absolutely absorbed in the problem."[16]

> I had always sworn to Pop that I could out-track M'Cola but I realized now that in the past I had been giving a sort of Garrick performance . . . and that in straight, steady trailing, now in the heat, with the sun really bad . . . trailing in short grass on hard ground where a blood spot was difficult to see . . . a heat shimmer over the ground now when you straightened up to let your neck stop aching and looked ahead, I knew M'Cola was immeasurably the better man and the better tracker.[17]

As in other books featuring the code hero, the hero must continually keep up the tension or life loses its zest. It is not enough that the hero face and conquer death once; the experience must be repeated often for him to continue to exist in this state where life is reduced to its simplest, most basic form: the hunter and the hunted; survival in the face of death. Thus, they must move on from one hunt to another, always enjoying the dangerous hunts more (the zebra hunting was a bore).[18]

Strangely enough, this book contained a hint of a philosophy that was to become a major point in a later novel: no man is an

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[16] Ibid., p. 268.

[17] Ibid., p. 269.

[18] Ibid., p. 127.

island, but becomes a part of all he has met. Notice Hemingway's thoughts about his driver on the safari:

> Kamau was very modest, quiet, and an excellent driver . . . whose elegance, achieved with an old coat and a safety pin, whose modesty, pleasantness and skill I admired so much now, and thought how, when we first were out, he had very nearly died of fever, and that if he had died it would have meant nothing to me except that we would be short a driver; while now whenever or wherever he should die I would feel badly.

However, his love of humanity had not yet reached the expanse it would attain in For Whom the Bell Tolls, for in the next breath he said:

> Then abandoning the sweet sentiment of the distant and improbable death of Kamau, I thought what a pleasure it would be to shoot David Garrick . . . just to see the look on his face . . . .[19]

His other African stories revealed more of his developing attitudes and insights. The irony is too great to let pass without comment Hemingway's description of a gun-shot wound--in the head:

> Wilson had ducked to one side to get in a shoulder shot, Macomber had stood solid and shot for the nose, shooting a touch high each time and hitting the heavy horns . . . and Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull.
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> . . . he felt a sudden white-hot, blinding flash explode inside his head and that was all he ever felt.[20]

"It became more and more apparent that . . . the obsession of death was taking hold of him, that again and again he was writing of the end--the end of love, the end of life, the end of hope, the end of

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[19] Ibid., pp. 177-178.

[20] "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 36. All page references to short stories in this chapter are from this source.

all."[21] André Maurois, quoting in part from Philip Young, characterizes Hemingway's attitudes following his return from Africa. The parenthetical material reveals the mind of Harry Street the hero of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" through which Hemingway was projecting his own thoughts.)

> . . . everything seems to indicate that in 1936 Hemingway felt dissatisfied with himself. In Africa he had hunted with very rich people (although "they were dull and they drank too much, or they played too much backgammon"). He had drunk too much himself ("so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions"). Seven lean years had passed since he had written a good book: A Farewell to Arms (and "you made an attitude that you cared nothing for the work you used to do, now that you could no longer do it"). Two marriages had finished badly . . . . And to top it all, the thought of his own death obsessed him. With horror he realized that "it could all end like this--on an idle safari, haggling with a woman." His second wife divorced him in 1940.[22]

Five years after that the third Mrs. Hemingway made her exit, and in a subsequent book, Hemingway, as Colonel Richard Cantwell, comments: "I have lost three wives . . . in the same way one loses a good battalion, through errors in judgment . . . ."[23] Love had betrayed Hemingway as it had his heroes, a disillusionment preconditioned by his parents' unsatisfactory relationship. And then came Miss Mary.

Hemingway's heroes followed him to the Caribbean on his continuing study of death. An expatriate still, he withdrew even

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[21] J. Kashkeen, op. cit., p. 79.

[22] Maurois, op. cit., p. 45.

[23] Ernest Hemingway, Across the River and into the Trees (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 95.

farther from the United States (he had been living for a number of years in Key West) in a move to Cuba. But together he and his heroes Robert Jordan and Harry Morgan made a return to humanity. The years spent in a study of death had given Hemingway a philosophy, a code, which had put new meaning into life. By learning to face death--by proving to himself his own courage--he (like Francis Macomber) had learned to live again. Now, as Harry Morgan, he asserted his realization that no man alone has a chance; and his coverage of the Spanish Civil War helped him to conclude with Robert Jordan that indeed no man is an island and that humanity and its causes are worth fighting for, and dying for.

"More than any other single thing, it seems to have been the civil war in Spain that returned Hemingway to the world of other people."[24] In this war Hemingway began to care about people's lives and what they live and die for rather than merely about the enjoyment of experience. He bacame interested in a justification of his own life.

> In Spain . . . he found men dying in a slightly different context, no longer out of mere resignation or boredom, or for purely occupational reasons or purely accidental ones. They were now dying for a political cause, for an idealism greater than their own egos. It was a new kind of dying for Hemingway, and it drew him . . . .[25]

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[24]Philip Young, Ernest Hemingway (No. 1 of Pamphlets on American Writers Series, eds. William Van O'Connor, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 15.

[25]Leo Gurko, "Hemingway in Spain," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work, ed. McCaffery, op. cit., p. 233.

He still saw the courage to face death well as supremely heroic, but it was not death for death's sake now, not death as a gesture, it was death for a cause.[26]

Hemingway's return to patriotism was evidenced by his heroic participation in World War II, "a war that finally made sense." In a tribute to Hemingway, Max Eastman compared the author's performance in both world wars:

> He first won my affection by telling me he was "scared to death," as I'm sure I would have been, in the war. He didn't tell me about his schrapnel wounds, and I never knew till long after that he spent weeks in a hospital in such a state of fright that he could not go to sleep in the dark. That he built himself up from that neurotic condition to a point where veterans and professional soldiers of World War II declared him to be "quite simply the bravest man they ever saw" strikes me as a manifestation of moral character as superb as anything to be found in the life histories of literary men.[27]

As a sign that Hemingway's recovery from the psychological wound of World War I was indeed complete, he made a symbolic journey as Richard Cantwell back to the place where he had first been wounded. He could bear thinking about the war now, and he finally released all his bitterness about it through Colonel Cantwell. Someone remarked that Across the River and into the Trees read as if Hemingway were being interviewed.[28] To say that it read as if he were on

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[26]Edgar Johnson, "Farewell the Separate Peace," reprinted in Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Works, ed. McCaffery, op. cit., p. 123.

[27]Max Eastman, "Thoughts About Ernest Hemingway," Saturday Review (March 24, 1962), p. 8.

[28]Young, op. cit., p. 18.

the psychiatrist's couch would be more accurate. Again his portable Corona, No. 3, had been his psychoanalyst.

Like Colonel Cantwell, Hemingway was growing older--half a hundred years old--and he had begun to feel the effects of the battles, the accidents, the illnesses. He had made his return to life, to love, to humanity, to patriotism and ideals. Only one thing was lacking to put him completely at peace with himself. Hemingway never put a name to it, but an increasing amount of religious symbolism had been appearing in his later novels; he seemed to be reaching out for some consolation that a man's suffering in life was not in vain. The symbolism, which had begun in "Today Is Friday," became stronger in Across the River and into the Trees; and in The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway seemed to have found the answer: "I have had to read it now over two hundred times and every time it does something to me. It's as though I had gotten finally what I had been working for all my life."[29] As Santiago, Hemingway parables man's struggle on the great sea of life which gives (the victory over the marlin) and at the same time withholds (the sharks destroy the prize). The struggle of life cannot be won (death always looms large to threaten). All a man can hope to do is his best, to keep struggling, to play by the rules, to suffer his wounds. A man can do no more.

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[29]Ernest Hemingway, as quoted in Time magazine, September 8, 1952, p. 114.

The book brought almost universal acclaim from the critics, and many noted the religious spirit: "a poem of action, praising a brave man, a magnificent fish and the sea, with perhaps a new underlying reverence for the Creator of such wonders."[30]

> Although the view of life in this book . . . had a long evolution from the days of total despair, it represents nonetheless an extraordinary change in its author. A reverence for life's struggle, and for mankind, seems to have descended on Hemingway like the gift of grace on the religious. The knowledge that a simple man is capable of decency, dignity, and even heroism that Santiago possesses, and that his battle can be seen in heroic terms, is itself . . . perhaps the greatest victory that Hemingway has won.[31]

Thus Hemingway's lifetime of searching, of dwelling on matters of life--and death--was drawing rapidly to a close. Toward the end, he himself summarized the attitude toward death that he had acquired over the years:

> . . . if I ever get deadly sick, I want to go fast. My father committed suicide. As a young man, I thought he was a coward, but since then I have learned to face death. There is beauty

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[30]"Clean and Straight," Time (September 8, 1952), p. 114.

[31]Young, op. cit., p. 20. Young also made an apt translation of The Old Man and the Sea as a projection of Hemingway's feelings about his career at the time the book was written. "Like Hemingway, Santiago is a master who sets out his lines with more precision than his competitors, but he has not had any luck in a long time. Once he was very strong, the champion, yet his whole reputation is imperiled now, and he knows he is growing old. Still he feels that he has strength enough; he knows the tricks of his trade; he is resolute, and he is still out for the really big success. It means nothing that he has proved his strength before; he has got to prove it again, and he does. After he has caught his prize the sharks come and take it away from him, as they will always try to do. But he caught it, he fought it well, he did all he could and it was a lot, and at the end he is happy."(pp. 19-20)

> in death, a calmness, a transfiguration that is not frightening to me. I have not only seen death, but I am one of the few people who has read his own obituary. That was after the plane crash in Africa. It is like catching marlin. Marlin are born to be caught. A man is born to die. But while you are alive, make the best of it. Live life fully.[32]
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> The whole world is like a ring to me. Everyone is in the ring. You survive only if you fight back . . . I'll fight until my last day and then I will fight against myself in order to accept death as something beautiful . . . .[33]
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> No man can live forever . . . but when . . . he has to face his last fight with his own maker, he wants to be remembered for what he was: a real man.[34]

"The pursuit race" finally caught up with Ernest Hemingway. The one kind of death he had never faced--failing health--overtook him. In thinking about the morning of July 2, 1961, when Ernest Hemingway quietly stole downstairs to the foyer of his home to step into the ring for the last time in this his final encounter with death, one is strongly reminded of his magnificent story of another champion who stepped into the ring to surrender his title for fifty grand.

Like Jack Brennan, Hemingway was the champion. (He and death had had a lifetime of bouts together; Hemingway had won all the others.) He, like Jack, was not in shape for the fight, and, like Jack, he could not sleep for worrying about this last match and its outcome. Jack, it is recalled, was double-crossed in the ring. Walcott dealt him a blow below the belt; but Jack, insisting that

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[32]Singer, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

[33]Ibid., p. 20.

[34]Ibid., p. 25.

it was an accident, held himself together long enough to return a low blow and lose the match as planned. He lost, but in the manner of his losing he won: he "finished it off to please himself"; he lost the match, but on his own terms.

We have noted repeated instances in Hemingway's world in which life (or death) has pulled a "double-cross": Jake Barnes felt that he had been double-crossed by the war; Lt. Henry learned about life's dirty tricks; Robert Jordan was double-crossed by fate, escaping the bridge only to suffer a bit of ill luck so that he must die anyway; Harry Street was dealt a low blow by fate and his own carelessness. Life in Hemingway's world often hits below the belt, and it takes real courage for a man to hold himself together long enough to go out in style.

In those last years of declining health--faced with a slow, humiliating death; a mere shadow of his former self, having lost the physique and manly vigor he was so proud of; haunted by doubts that any of his life's work had really been good--it is possible that he, like Jack Brennan, knowing that he could not possibly win and feeling that he was being double-crossed, mustered together all his will power to finish it off to please himself. Hemingway, like Jack, did not want to be knocked out--his pride and integrity could not stand a blow like that. Hemingway had expressed his feelings on that subject many years earlier in Death in the Afternoon:

> [When] Gitanillo became delirious in the hot weather with the nerve pain [, you] could hear him in the street. It seemed a crime to keep him alive and he would have been much luckier to

> have died soon after the fight while he still had control of himself and still possessed his courage rather than to have gone through the progressive horror of physical and spiritual humiliation that the long enough continued bearing of unbearable pain produces. . . . The horses are given almost instant death; the bull gets death within fifteen minutes . . . . But as long as man is regarded as having an immortal soul and doctors will keep him alive through times when death would seem the greatest gift one man could give another, then the horses and the bulls will seem well taken care of and man to run the greatest risk.[36]

Thus it was that Hemingway, feeling that death was cheating on him, returned a low blow and cheated death out of victory on death's terms. He threw the match, but on his own terms; he finished it off to please himself. His method of "losing the match" we, like the referee, must label a foul: death is the winner on a foul, like Walcott in the story. But if Hemingway were writing the closing lines of this his own story, he would surely say of its hero: he lost, of course, but in the manner of his losing, he won; though he died physically, he won a kind of immortality, a spiritual victory, because he did not, like Ole Andreson, wait passively for death to come to him; he went out to meet death bravely as a matador faces the bull in the ring. Hemingway was destroyed, but never let it be said that he was defeated.

Is a man a coward for taking his own life? Yes. If he does so because he cannot face up to life. But Hemingway's case was a matter of being unable to face up to a slow, humiliating death.

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[36] Death in the Afternoon, p. 220.

According to his code of living, the greatest measure of a man's courage is that he die well. "Any . . . who had been nurtured on Hemingway had known, of course, that he would never die in bed."[37] He died as he chose--on his feet, in full possession of his physical and mental capacities--with his favorite hunting companion. For one who had loved life and had lived with such strength and vigor, it took a tremendous amount of courage to put an end to living.

But then, of course, it could have been, "in some incredible way," an accident.

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[37]Aronowitz, op. cit, p. 7.

EPILOGUE

On July 6, 1961, in a little country cemetery near the Idaho hunting ranges he loved, Ernest Hemingway was buried.

> Only his family and a few friends were there. But much of the world was also there, sorrowing. He was a gigantic man, in talent and physique, and his legacy of books was a monumental story about himself. It was a story importantly concerned with nobility (or the lack of it) in the presence of death.[1]

The place where he was buried (near his old friend and hunting companion, Taylor Williams) is far removed from the violent world he explored in his novels. The cemetery is located just across the river from the secluded home the author had so much enjoyed. And beyond the river can be seen the tree-covered slopes of the Sawtooth Mountains. It is a quiet, peaceful place.

> He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, the other needs. It was all back of him. Now it was done. He was very tired. He made his camp. He was there, in the good place.[2]

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[1] *Life* (July 14, 1961), p. 60.

[2] Thoughts of Nick Adams, "Big Two-Hearted River: Part I," *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 215.

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* All articles preceded by the number one (1) appear in McCaffery, Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work; articles preceded by the number two (2) are in Baker, Hemingway and His Critics; and the articles preceded by the number three (3) are in Weeks, Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays. (Paperback editions of these works were used for this study; therefore page references may vary slightly from the original hardbound editions.)

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